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Rebel leaders and conflict processes: An individual level analysis

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REBEL LEADERS AND CONFLICT PROCESSES:

AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Civil conflict is a complex and ambiguous phenomenon that requires a multi-dimensional investigation. A concentration on rebel leaders in the study of conflict promises a good amount of potential for obtaining interesting findings. This dissertation examines rebel leader survival and rebel leaders' influence on various conflict processes. It demonstrates that relative rebel strength, external support favoring the government, and oil production of the state have a significant impact on rebel leader tenure.

To explain why we observe some considerable increases in the number of civilian killings in the course of conflict, the dissertation develops a theoretical model, putting the emphasis on rebel leader tenure and its potential in-group influences on the strategic decision of targeting civilians. Empirically, the analysis reveals a statistically significant relationship between civilian victimization and rebel leader tenure in Africa.

The dissertation also contributes to the literature on state leaders, and interstate conflict more generally, by linking prior rebel leadership experience and militarized internationalized dispute initiation, showing that such experience is likely to increase the likelihood for state leaders to initiate armed conflicts. Introducing new data on rebel leaders in each substantive chapter, the dissertation offers a comprehensive, comparative and contextual treatment of rebel leaders and conflict.

DEDICATION

To my mom,

Zeynep Yalciner,

with love and an abundance of gratitude.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I did not walk the journey alone, and with immense gratitude I would like to thank several people. I would first like to acknowledge my dissertation advisor, Susan H. Allen, for helping me out when I was struggling and needed it the most. She also offered plenty of wisdom and patience that makes her warrant the highest commendations. This dissertation has also been improved significantly thanks to conversations and courses with the other committee members. Following the initial phase, it was further shaped by countless insightful conversations with Jeff Carter to whom I owe a debt of gratitude –especially for helping me deal with the empirical issues. I thank Gregory Love for providing incisive and thought-provoking feedback. I also thank Todd Smitherman for being willing to be exposed to the depressing world of civil wars. Finally, the idea for the dissertation was born from a reaction paper for Jacob Kathman's memorable graduate seminar in civil war. I would like to thank him for lighting the fire and making me believe that my idea is interesting.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION

The sixth and current President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, previously commanded the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). When the former leader, Fred Rwigyema, led the group with a force of over 4,000 into Rwanda in October 1990, Kagame was attending a course in Fort Leavenworth, United States. Following the death of Rwigyema on the third day of the clashes between the government forces and the RPF, and the group's decaying chance of success due to the loss of more than half of the troops, Kagame returned to Africa and took command of the RPF forces. After two months of the regeneration of his soldiers, Kagame restarted the war, which lasted almost four years and finally resulted in the military victory of the RPF in July 1994 (Asselin, St-Pierre, and Carment, 2007.) In four years, the RPF killed 1273 civilians (UCDP database).

What differed between the RPF led by Kagame and the RPF led by his predecessor? Can we explain the discrepancy between the two practices by relying only on group dynamics? Or can an individual-level focus provide some fruitful insights? How did Kagame survive? When and why did he choose to victimize civilians? How did his experience as a rebel leader affect his

conflict-related tendencies when he became the President of Rwanda in 2000?[1] This dissertation mainly aims to answer these questions by proposing a rebel leader-level focus on conflict processes.

The role of individual political leaders has recently gained currency among scholars in international relations. Employing individual leaders as the primary focus of research provides the advantage of a clear emphasis on decision-makers, their individual-level impacts on political phenomena, and their incentives and constraints. However, the current research on civil conflict tends to consider rebel groups[2] as unitary actors. Given the complex nature of rebellion and the pivotal role of leaders in rebel actions, I argue that this reductive perspective is overly simplistic. Despite the large literature on state leaders, the body of research focusing on rebel leaders falls on the weaker side of the conflict literature. Even most of the current research on state leaders and interstate conflict put emphasis on the role of domestic institutional arrangements in shaping leaders' behavior rather than the role of their attributes at the individual level.

Attempting to fill this research gap within the literature, my dissertation studies rebel leaders and their influence on conflict processes. Employing rebel leaders as the level-of-analysis, except Chapter 3, it therefore seeks to find answers to the following questions: What are the determinants of rebel leader survival? Does leader tenure affect rebels' incentives to target civilians? If so, how? What happens when rebel leaders become state leaders? Do they seek to maintain peace and security or do they make their countries more conflict-prone internationally?

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1 Paul Kagame had been de facto leader since 1994, but had focused more on military, foreign affairs and the country's security than day-to-day governance (Meredith, 2011).

2 In this dissertation, I use the terms “rebels”, “rebel groups”, “rebel organization”, “rebellion”, “insurgents”, and “insurgency” interchangeably. These all are armed factions that use violence to challenge the state. These are distinguished from “militias”, a broader concept encompassing all armed factions that use violence including those that work alongside state forces, from “guerrilla”, a term that refers to a type of warfare that rebels frequently engage in but is not limited to rebel groups, nor is the only kind of warfare that rebels utilize. Using some politically ambiguous terms is also avoided such as “terrorist” and “freedom fighter” (Mampilly, 2011). For a detailed discussion of the taxonomy of armed groups, see Nadarajah and Sriskandarajah (2005) and Bhatia (2005).

Before all else, to ground the basis of the dissertation, I should highlight a central question: Why do rebel leaders matter? They are not homogenous, and they behave in different ways depending on their motivations and goals. Thus, they should not be treated as though they are all alike. However, there are some commonalities. First, they are highly likely to leave their individual stamp on the course of war with their strong preferences and distinctive personalities since they are less likely to be constrained by institutional checks and norms than state leaders. Thus, they are much more autonomous and individually engaged in conflict which makes them appropriate for an individual-level analysis. Even though they are mostly concerned with social pressures, and, as non-state actors, they are limited in their actions due to the limited capabilities they possess, they can still be influential actors in many civil wars.

Second, in most cases rebel leaders are not only the leaders of rebellions, but also the organizers and instigators of them. They play a crucial role in all stages of rebellion seeking to recruit the best participants for their movements, find financial support, attempt to attract attention of third parties to internationalize the conflict if necessary, and, occasionally, target civilians to make an introduction to armed conflict and to demonstrate their ruthlessness as a rebel leader. Therefore, in most cases, the concept of "rebel leadership" should actually refer to an actor who has a broad sphere of influence within the conflict.

Third, treating rebel groups as social movements, or treating them as if they were states, does not adequately help us to understand how they are organized and they operate. Such approaches may be fruitful for understanding the onset of civil conflict, but a more micro-level context is required to make a full sense of structural organization of rebel groups.

Finally, understanding the behavior of rebel groups *vis-a-vis* incumbents requires knowledge of the individual-level dynamics underlying the rebel leadership. Hence, the need for

a focus on rebel leaders provides the motivation for this dissertation, which will attempt to open up the black box of leadership dynamics and rebel behavior, with the expectation of several theoretical and empirical implications.

It is very common to define civil wars as a form of political violence with three major characteristics: they involve armed violence between incumbents and organized non-state groups that seek to capture control of the government or over a region or to gain some concessions from the government by means of violence; the armed conflict kills at least 1,000 people over its course and 100 on average in every year; and, finally, at least 100 people die on both sides of the conflict (Fearon and Laitin, 2003).

Ted Gurr, in *Why Men Rebel* (1970), gave the statistic for civil conflicts between 1961-1968: Some form of violent civil conflict broke out in 114 of the world's 121 larger nations and colonies. Civil conflicts, however, especially in the period afterwards the Cold War, have become the dominant political record of the world. As of 2014, over 160 rebel organizations are still active in over 50 states, while we do not see any ongoing interstate armed conflict in the global arena.[3]

This tendency has clearly bolstered the concentration on civil conflict, and rebel groups in particular, which has produced new understandings of conflict onset (Ross, 2004; Collier, Hoeffler, and Sambanis, 2005; Fearon, Kasara, and Laitin, 2007), third-party intervention (Regan, 2002; Regan and Aydin, 2006; Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, and Joyce, 2008), civilian victimization (Eck and Hultman, 2007; Wood, Kathman, and Gent, 2012; Wood and Kathman, 2014), and conflict outcomes (Walter, 1997; Karl and Sobek, 2004; Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan,

[3] The UCDP conflict database, <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/database/>, 9.15.14.

2009). Yet the literature lacks a key part of the puzzle that other fields of political science have long studied-- the influence of leaders over conflicts, processes, and outcomes.

In line with the growing literature attaching importance to the role of leaders in conflicts, my dissertation aims to draw attention to the fact that individuals cannot be treated as insignificant or passive actors of armed civil conflicts. Individuals, on the contrary, often play a key role in all stages of conflicts by organizing, fighting, manipulating, and most importantly, leading a rebellion. Although decision-making and actions taken during wartime are often shaped and constrained by institutional settings and the conflict environment, this dissertation suggests that rebel leaders should be treated as the fundamental actors in civil wars, and, therefore, they should be integrated into theories of both civil war and leadership in international relations.

The simplifying assumption of the dissertation is that rebel leaders' decisions and attributes come into play in different contexts in different ways. Their survival, concern of authority implementation, or leadership experience may have an impact upon different processes of conflict. Therefore, Chapters Two, Three, and Four focus on different phenomena in which rebel leaders play an important role.

With my theoretical and empirical focus on rebel leaders, I aim to underline that analyzing conflict processes with a leader-level emphasis can open up new avenues of research on civil conflicts. I believe that there is much promise in research that investigates leader-level variability. As Chiozza and Goemans (2011) report, there is more variation at the leader level in international conflict than state or system levels. I simply argue that we can see a similar, but a

stronger, pattern in civil conflict as well since rebel leaders vary not only in their characteristics but also in their way of leading insurgencies.[4]

Following Chapter Two, reviewing the literature of international relations on leaders, Chapter Three concentrates on rebel leader survival. In the light of the underlying differences mentioned above between state and rebel leaders, Chapter Two attempts to provide insights on why some of the determinants of staying in office may differ between state and rebel leaders while others may stay the same. Underlining the competing arguments about the impact of foreign support on state leader survival, therefore, it seeks to investigate how and in what direction this mechanism works for rebel leaders. Given that almost all rebel groups are autocratic organizations, Chapter Two examines whether the current arguments and findings on the destabilizing effects of external resources on autocratic state leaders remain standing for rebel leaders, or, third-parties, as some scholars contend, are more likely to provide support to state leaders facing elevated risks of losing office, and we expect that rebel leaders are more likely to stay in power when their rebellion is supported by an external party.

Chapter Three also focuses on the potential causal relationship between relative rebel capabilities and rebel leader survival. One would easily expect that leaders of rebel groups with larger capabilities are more likely to stay in office since the chance of success is relatively higher. However, as Bueno de Mesquita et al.'s (2003, p. 277) selectorate theory contends, when the leader's followers cannot observe the available resources, and the leader diverts resources to her own use, the leader may face a challenger and the risk of losing power. Since larger capabilities come along with larger expectations of success from leaders during civil war, rebel elites may

[4] Some rebel leaders are founders of the rebellion they lead, while others serve as a commander only.

impose some costs on their leader in case of a downturn. Chapter Three, therefore, analyses the relationship between relative rebel strength and rebel leader survival as well.

Chapter Four deals with the effects of rebel leaders' consolidation of power on rebel violence against civilians in civil war by suggesting that rebel leadership matters crucially in one-sided violence sustained by rebel groups against civilians. Most of the research on civil conflict tends to approach civilian victimization as a war-like rivalry and competition between governments and rebel groups. They compete for recruitment, public support, control of resources and strategic territories, and third-party support. Civil wars, however, are also the setting for competition occurring inside of rebel groups, which often have to face a handover of leadership. Although civil conflicts can potentially affect the government leaders' future tenure as well, this kind of competition is almost inevitable in rebel groups since rebel leaders have to deal with the risk of death or capture.

Chapter Four contends that intentional civilian killings are determined in part by rebel leaders' consolidation of power, due to an in-group demonstration effect. I basically argue that the longer rebel leaders' tenure, the stronger the signal of their dominance, control, and authority over their rebel forces. In this sense, victimizing civilians may serve as a part of authority implementation, which a leader must do to solidify his leadership. As Schneider (2009) points out, many rebel leaders consider victimizing civilians as an introduction to battlefield activities. Hence, targeting civilians in this case would not be a beneficial option for the longer-tenured leader in terms of demonstration of his power and dominance. The less consolidated leader, in contrast, is more likely to be expected to prove his competence through some reckless insurgency tactics.

By shifting the focus up to the interstate realm, Chapter Five investigates what prevailed rebel leaders transform into in the post-conflict period in terms of their proneness to interstate conflicts. Put otherwise, I analyze how prior rebel experiences influence state leaders' decisions in terms of conflict initiation. The conventional wisdom that former experiences determine, or at least heavily affect, an individual's future behavior constitutes a central assumption in many fields of social science including psychology and sociology. Even though many political scientists may heuristically embrace this insight, the current interstate conflict research fails to incorporate adequately how this causal mechanism may systematically work in explaining leaders' conflict behavior.

Assuming that all political leaders are risk-tolerant and ambitious to some extent, rebel leadership comes forth as one of the most relevant experiences for a state leader within this context. Despite the fact that all rebel leaders are not necessarily "revolutionary", in most cases they still have to be ruthless and risk-tolerant enough to attempt to overturn the established political apparatus and power of government. In other words, rebel leadership is a particularly risky endeavor because challenging the state with military force is an action much more likely to end in failure than success, and those on the losing side often suffer severe personal consequences.

Given the historical record, especially in Africa, which shows that many rebel leaders became presidents after they had fought a civil war, Chapter Five suggests that prior rebel experience affects the way leaders make decisions to initiate conflict once they get into office. It also discusses another potential causal path between former rebel leaders and conflict initiation that relies on the internal factors such as institutional constraints and political structures.

Relying on two different bodies of literature --political-psychology-oriented research on the role of former experiences in political behavior including decision-making, and the emerging scholarly work on the causal mechanism between leaders' backgrounds and conflict behavior-- the two competing arguments presented in this chapter also attempt to integrate the insights that have been provided by these two avenues of research by underlying the causal paths previously addressed by both.

Chapter Six concludes the dissertation, and provides a summary of findings obtained in each chapter, a discussion of the individual-level role of rebel leaders in conflict processes, and thoughts on future research.

CHAPTER II.

REVIEWING EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP

Four decades ago, the study of leaders came into prominence in the field of International Relations. In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars delved into international behavior by focusing on leaders, generally from an organizational perspective (Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, 1962). However, the role of the international system predominated the field as the primary unit of analysis, even more so following Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Afterwards, this strong emphasis on the system was, to a large extent, substituted by a new focus on state characteristics and dyadic relations in the 1980s and 1990s, with work on the democratic peace as an obvious example (Doyle, 1983; Maoz and Abdolali, 1989; Bremer 1992; Maoz and Russett 1993; Kochler, 1995). This shift was significantly promoted by the emergence of new data sources on country characteristics, such as the Polity data. More recently, however, the field has come full circle as scholars increasingly analyze international political behavior from the perspective of leaders (Goemans, 2000; Gelpi and Grieco, 2001; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Chiozza and Choi, 2003; Chiozza and Goemans, 2003, 2004, 2011; Marinov, 2005; Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam, 2005).

Despite the enormous growth in research on leaders over the last several years (Weeks, 2012; Debs, and Goemans, 2010; Croco, 2011; Flores et al., 2013), most of the current studies on

leaders and interstate conflict focus on how domestic institutional settings constrain and influence the incentives for leaders' behavior rather than demonstrating how variation in leaders' individual attributes affects state behavior. Most existing research on leaders themselves, though useful, generally analyzes the actions of individual leaders in isolation, rather than across space and time (Saunders, 2011), although some exceptions exist in the literature focusing on leader selection and the link between leaders and economic growth (Besley and Reynal-Querol, 2011; Jones and Olken, 2005), between leader attributes and conflict (Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam, 2005; Horowitz and Stam, 2012; Weeks, 2012; Colgan, 2013a).

Aside from these exceptions, the research on leaders focuses on how variations in domestic institutional contexts shape factors such as leadership tenure (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Chiozza and Goemans 2003, 2004), the institutionally-induced relationship between leadership tenure and conflict (Goemans, 2008; Debs and Goemans 2010), the responsibility and punishment of leaders (Goemans 2000; Croco, 2011; Wolford, 2012), and the decisions of leaders in the military arena (Weeks, 2011).

Although they have attracted very limited attention so far, however, the individual-level effects have not been entirely disregarded in civil war research. While some scholars focus on broader questions to investigate why individuals choose to participate in civil wars (Gurr, 1970; Tilly, 1978; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008; Blattman and Miguel, 2010), others go further by dealing with their direct and/or indirect role in killing civilians (Walter, 2009; Valentino, 2004; Goemans, Gleditcsch, and Chiozza, 2009; Weinstein, 2007).

An increasing number of studies point out that civilian victimization does not always stem from power asymmetries between rebels and governments, but from the incentives that armed crowds provide to their leaders. Drawing on the principal-agent literature, this point of

view conceives of one-sided violence as the by-product of a lack of control by the leader or the predominant recruitment of rebels whose primary incentive is having economic gain (Azam, 2002; Mitchell, 2009). The existing empirical studies, though, tend to consider civilian-killing strategies as largely inefficient, attributing the action to the lack of control by the leaders or the recruitment of opportunistic killers instead of soldiers who are devoted to the long-term aspirations of the rebel organization (Weinstein, 2005, 2007).

Once in control of territory, rebel leaders choose between resorting to violence to quell internal discontent and finding alternative ways of winning civilian support. At a basic level, controlling territory allows rebel leaders to offer benefits to civilians in ways that those without territory control could never do (Kriger, 1992). Reaching out to the noncombat civilian population makes strategic sense from the perspective of rebel leaders. Even in case of mass mobilization, only a tiny portion of the civilian population is likely to involve in conflict actively. Lichbach (1995) estimates that only about 5% of any population is likely to be active and militant participants. Wood (2003) put the upper limit at well below a third of the total population. When choosing to target civilians for strategic reasons, the key factor for rebel leaders is to ensure that this passive majority does not totally side against the insurgency. Some argue that it would be possible for rebel leaders, over time, to legitimize the rebel political authority in the eyes of civilians by working to normalize the social and political order and develop a comprehensive system of governance (Wickham-Crowley, 1987).

Aside from the battle-related decisions, rebel leaders regularly engage in a variety of governance activities, including, but not limited to, establishing a system of food production and distribution, fulfilling the health and education needs of the population, providing security from the government violence, allocating resources to bring opportunities to civilians to involve in

their livelihood activities, resolving social disputes, and dealing with other social problems (Mampilly, 2011).

Though the governance aspect of rebellion has not attracted the same attention from scholars of conflict as other aspects of rebel behavior. The writings of journalists, the reports of international organizations, and movement members' documenting have been the largest chunk of the available resources that provide detailed information of the historical trajectory of specific rebel groups. Though fruitful, such accounts do not attempt to offer a theoretical framework for understanding rebel leadership as a discrete subject of inquiry. Especially in more recent analyses of rebel behavior, scholars have focused on insurgent interactions with civilians, recruitment strategies and the use of violence. This trend in the conflict research, particularly evident in the post-Collier literature on civil conflict, is inclined to simplify the highly complex rebel organization into its most eye-catching component, feeding the view that treats all non-state armed groups as criminal organizations (Mampilly, 2011, p. 6).[5] These studies on recruitment and violence, therefore, do not provide much insight into the leader-level elements of rebel behavior.

The body of research on civil conflict onset is not an exception to this. The two prominent models that explain where and why civil conflict occurs tell us surprisingly little about the structure of rebel organizations. While one approach treats rebellions as social movements (Gurr, 1970; Scott, 1976), the other treats rebel groups as if they were states (Posen, 1993; Wagner, 1993; Van Evera, 1994). There is no doubt that such approaches provide useful insights for understanding the onset of civil conflict. To make sense of the all processes of civil conflict, however, we need a more micro-level perspective on rebel organizations (Weinstein, 2007).

[5] Although rebel governance is not the primary focus of his study, Weinstein (2007) is an important exception to this.

The first set of models, which puts forward the greed-grievance dichotomy, considers rebellion as the explosion of discontent from an aggrieved group of people. Grievances, which motivate and provoke masses to participate, lead to mass discontent, political instability, and violence especially when income inequality and a hierarchical class structure are coupled with ethnic cleavages (Gurr and Moore, 1997; Horowitz, 1985; Muller and Seligson, 1987). Greed, or opportunity, which often emerges when state capacity is weak, fuels some rebel organizations in which recruits seek to enrich themselves through looting natural resources, even though rebel leaders may not allow such motives (Collier and Hoeffler, 1999, 2004; Ross, 2004; Weinstein, 2005).

These models makes implicit assertions that residents of an aggrieved region would want to participate, would be allowed to participate, and/or would mobilize to act when the opportunity exists. These theories, therefore, offer little that helps to make sense of how rebels groups are structured, and adopt different organizational forms and practices (Weinstein, 2007).

The second dominant approach tends to treat rebel groups as states or states in the making. Relying on the initial theoretical framework on interstate conflict, the followers of these models consider rebellion as the result of a security dilemma. Following the collapse or erosion of a central authority, groups compete for control to maximize and/or protect their own interests. Rebel groups, like sovereign states, operate in anarchic conditions of the system, and take actions to improve their own security since they cannot rely on the protection of the state. These security-maximizing actions, in turn, make other groups feel less secure. So, they respond in kind, and the political climate becomes less stable. Once all groups get active and offensive, violence arises (Posen, 1993; Evera, 1994; Wagner, 1993).

This approach, again, largely lacks structural notions in its model of rebellion. The concept of the security dilemma does not offer any specific way in which we understand how rebel groups organize to protect their security, but rather simply suggests that they just do. The existence of anarchy is deemed sufficient to understand the participation of individuals in conflict, and the mobilization and operational structure of rebel groups. As Weinstein (2007) put it, rebel organizations, like states in traditional studies of interstate conflict, are treated like a black box.

One of the rare contributions framed in leader-level comes from Mampilly (2011) who makes an analogy between Gramscian discussion of modern state and rebel organization. He asserts that rebel leaders face a challenge comparable to that described by Gramsci (1992) in his analysis of power and state. Although Gramsci's focus is on modern state and its constituents, Mampilly argues that Gramsci's insights are highly beneficial "[…] for understanding the behavior of rebel leaders seeking to exert control not only over a specific territory but over its corresponding civilian population as well. Specifically, in order to ensure their viability, insurgent leaders cannot only be concerned with the establishment of a coercive apparatus but must also gain a degree of consent from the civilian population". In fact, this view replicates some of the functions and forms of state leaders that will allow a rebel leader to acquire civilian support for its political authority and achieve some form of legitimacy.

Like governments of nation states, rebel leaders have to interact –and even negotiate– with civilians in exchange for their loyalty, which is a very hard task as demands of civilian population frequently consist of a variety of different and competing perspectives (Olson, 1993; Clapham, 1998). Rebel leaders may adopt a variety of approaches in their interaction with

civilians, ranging from adopting autocratic practices to providing them an opportunity to participate in the decision-making mechanism (Mampilly, 2011).

Some scholars draw direct comparisons between processes of state formation and the emergence of rebel organizations. Some connects the provision of services by violent rebel actors to state formation (Reno, 2001), while others go further by asserting that rebel governance systems should be considered as de facto states (Pegg, 1998; Joseph, 2002). This approach bases its argument on the view that except for their lack of juridical recognition by the international community, such systems manifest all the attributes of states, and deserve to be treated as such at least conceptually:

> States-within-states have imposed effective control over a territory within a larger state and may have an impressive array of institutional structures that, among other things, allow taxes to be collected, services to be provided, and business with other international actors to be conducted. Yet, they lack the very thing that quasi-states do possess: juridical status (Kingston and Spears, 2004).[6]

Some studies addressing rebel groups' state-like functions pay more attention to the matter of organization (Skocpol, 1982; Goodwin and Skocpol, 1989). These studies tend to treat rebel organizations as legitimate competitors for the sovereign control of territory and claim that they begin to bring off the functions of incumbents even before they take power in the capital, and that the key function they perform is the provision of collective goods (Tilly, 1978). To be able to distribute collective goods, rebel groups have to be of sufficient size and strength to challenge the government. At this point, the conflict leads to a situation of multiple sovereignty

[6] One prominent exception was the offer by Andres Pastrana, the former Colombian President, to divide the territory into separate areas of government and FARC (The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) control (Mampilly, 2011).

in which at least two contenders compete to be the main political power and at least some part of the population esteems the movement of the rebel group by following its directives (Tilly, 1978; Weinstein, 2007).

Through a credible claim to control over a specific part of the national territory, rebel leaders provide the potential recruits/subjects future collective benefits as an incentive for support, much as governments do when they provide basic health care, education and infrastructure. Even though insurgent collective action may entail the expectation of future collective benefits, in fact public costs predominate in the short term. In other words, individuals may participate in rebellion not in spite of risk but in order to better manage it (Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007).

The most widely recognized explanation for why some rebel leaders manage to solve the collective action problem is that political change will generate private benefits for the leaders and their followers. Collier and Hoeffler (1999) suggest that "looting rebellions do not face intrinsic collective action problems because the activity is privately profitable. By contrast, justice rebellions face […] problems in collective action." They specifically note that looting-centered insurgencies, unlike those that seek justice, need not defeat a government because their goal is achieved as long as they can keep stealing from the local population and exploiting mineral resources that they have seized.[7]

Indeed, we see subtle agreements and disagreements between the emerging body of research on the economic incentives involved in civil conflict and the traditional economics school of thought.[8] The empirical record that examines rebels reveals that almost all rebel leaders

7 The civil wars occurred in Angola and Sierra Leone seem to fit into this scope, while those in Somalia, Rwanda, and Sudan do not.

8 This distinction may cause a key difference in the understanding of civil conflicts. Some view civil war as merely a competition for resources between two sides (Besley and Persson (2008), while others point out a predatory state

use economic incentives but they also use other strategies to motivate their subjects, such as political indoctrination, coercion, and ethnic mobilization. The FLN (Algeria), the ZANU and ZAPU (Zimbabwe), and the ANC and PAC (South Africa) are examples of rebel groups that made costly investments in the political indoctrination of their fighters and, more interestingly, their followers. (Herbst, 2000).[9] Rebellion-specific factors may cause different insurgencies to evolve in different ways, depending on the types of motivational resources that are available to leaders. Lootable resources may play a critical role in some cases, and sometimes they may be relatively irrelevant. Rebel leaders who have to face the definite risk of wipeout from a relatively strong political apparatus, thereby, must establish a cohesive militarized force where the motivations of fighters has been internalized through political and/or ethnic indoctrination fermented with a considerable amount of military coercion. Herbst (2000) suggests that

> As rational entrepreneurs of violence, rebel leaders decide to use that combination of motivations that is most likely to be effective given the state they are facing and the terrain of their country. Therefore, while scholars and policy makers are correct to recognize economic agendas as one aspect of civil wars in Africa (and elsewhere in the world), it is simply not persuasive to suggest that economic agendas are the only or even the primary driving force behind rebellion.

Keen (1998) points out that ideologically motivated rebel leaders –Mao Zedong and Che Guevara– banned economic violence among their forces and obtained highly disciplined rebel

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and a potential rebel leader, as the primary starters of the conflict, who seek to recruit masses with material and ideological incentives in order to seize the revenue of the state (Eck, 2007; Gates and Nordas, 2010).

[9] The FLN (Algeria), the ZANU and ZAPU (Zimbabwe), and the ANC and PAC (South Africa) are examples of rebel groups that made costly investments in the political indoctrination of their fighters and, more interestingly, their followers.

movements as a result. Nevertheless, Keen (1998) adds that, especially in the post-cold war era, civil conflict has increasingly become the continuation of economics by other means as insurgencies are no longer anticolonial-oriented and it has become much harder than before for rebels to get foreign support. Consequently, rebels have to depend financially on the land and sometimes become overdependent to looting (Herbst, 2000).[10]

One of the most important collective goods that rebel leaders provide is security. In particular, they pledge protection from incumbent forces (Weinstein, 2007). Counterinsurgent forces tend to act brutally, employing tactics that may target and victimize civilians indiscriminately in an effort to dry up the support base for rebel movements (Kalyvas, 2006). Such indiscriminate violence can drive individuals into the waiting arms of rebel leaders, especially when their groups are capable of mobilizing armed forces to protect civilians from further violence of the government. The historical record reveals that extreme levels of state violence often leave noncombatants no other option than to join the insurgents (Goodwin, 2001).

Scholars also discuss at length how transboundary components interact with rebel leaders within conflict zones. These transboundary interactions "play a major role in creating, transforming, and destroying forms of order and authority" (Callaghy et al., 2001). Kassimir (2001) asserts that these transnational actors not only have an impact on the provision of services generally deemed the responsibility of the state but may also allege the right to represent an affected population.[11]

Rebel leaders mostly remain aware of the potential benefits and risks of interacting with the transnational actors, and often seek to incorporate their relationships with such actors into the

[10] "The mining of diamonds by Jonas Savimbi's UNITA movement in Angola and the creation of private commercial alliances in the vast areas of Liberia that Charles Taylor controlled before he was elected president in 1997 (so-called Taylorland) are seen as prime examples of the new economics of war" (Herbst, 2000).

[11] One example of this kind of irredentist claims of states is the government of Rwanda's repeated attempts to influence the Rwandophone population located in the eastern Congo.

political project of the rebellion (Bob, 2006). Since rebel groups tend to consider themselves as either governments-in-waiting or as detached political entities, their leaders seek legitimacy by engaging in interactions with transnational actors. International media coverage also comes into play at this point. Civil conflicts in ethnically diverse countries are highly likely to be ethnically patterned without being ethnically caused. International media coverage of conflicts often put the emphasis on history and ethnicity since rebel leaders adopt this sort of discourse.[12] Grievances are to a rebel organization what image is to a business, and rebel leaders need to stimulate a sense of collective grievance to build cohesion in their army and to attract funding from their diaspora living in rich countries (Collier, 2003). They, however, try to find the correct balance in their interactions with these third-party actors since they still have to face incumbents who enjoy the advantage of being a political entity recognized by international community (Zahar, 2001).

In addition to these transboundary elements, a limited literature slightly touches the leader-level dynamics within the military strategies that rebel leaders choose to employ. Bueno de Mesquita (2013) contends that "[…] engaging in conflict has option value for the rebel leaders in the sense that it allows the rebel organization to survive to fight another day. When the rebel organization is close to defeat, the rebel leaders hold out hope that economic or military circumstances might change in a way that is more favorable to attracting mobilization." Therefore, rebel leaders choose to pursue irregular conflict, which may take longer than their short-term interests, rather than withdraw from conflict and give up. This is especially true when the military environment is highly erratic, so that large shocks to rebel capacity –in either direction–are likely. The interesting feature of Bueno de Mesquita's game-theoretical model is that the facts it relies on speak to a well-known debate in the conflict literature. Even where there

[12] Fearon and Laitin (1996) assert that ethnicity also reduces monitoring and sanctioning costs for rebel leadership.

is no possibility of rebel victory, no electoral incentives, and no agency problems, the model generates behavior by rebel leaders similar to the "gambling for resurrection" behavior seen in international disputes (Downs and Rocke, 1994).[13]

Kalyvas (2004), on the other hand, argues that both types (regular and irregular) of tactics are used by rebel leaders simultenously within the context of a civil war. Regarding the preferences of rebel leaders on military strategies, other scholars place the emphasis on materialistic factors –some of which might reflect the rebel group's institutional design (Weinstein, 2007; Berman, 2009), internal factional conflict (Kydd and Walter, 2002; Bueno de Mesquita, 2005), sources of funding or weaponry (Weinstein, 2007), and control over territory (Carter, 2010).

Another aspect to which the leader-oriented conflict literature pays attention is leader survival. The scholars of political science have long adopted the basic assumption that leaders do what they do to stay in office. Foreseeing the effect of their behavior on their tenure, leaders employ policies and strategies that maximize their time in office. This approach has been applied to decisions to initiate, escalate and continue conflict (Fearon, 1994; Downs and Rocke, 1994; Leeds and Davis, 1997; Schultz, 2001; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Colaresi, 2004; Mansfield and Snyder, 2005; Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam, 2005; Lai and Slater, 2006), to impose or comply with sanctions (Marinov, 2005), to promote economic development (Bates, 1981; Wintrobe, 1998; Przeworski et al., 2000; Jones and Olken, 2005), to institute political reform (Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson, 1997), and the timing of elections (Warwick, 1994; Smith, 2003; Kayser, 2005).

[13] Note that the empirical evidence for the theory is mixed.

The survival-maximizing leader assumption has been considered enormously influential and fruitful (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza, 2009). The body of research on civil conflicts, however, again lacks this wealth of literature on leader survival. Some recent studies specifically control for state leaders' tenure and suggest that governments with longer-tenured leaders are more likely to respond to rebel violence with counter-violence, especially in separatist rebellions (Walter, 2009), and that a higher risk of losing office increases the probability of civil war (Chiozza, Gleditcsch, and Goemans, 2004).

However, the other side of the coin, rebel groups and their leaders, have been largely disregarded, although this renewed focus on the incentives of individual leaders holds much promise.[14] Rebel leader tenure, indeed, may play a key role in the course of civil war. The historical record reveals that rebel leaders tend to be killed by the government, by their own elites or by accidents in the fogs of civil war with some regularity, as seen in the violent deaths of Evo Fernandes (RENAMO, Mozambique), Ibrahim Afa (EPLF, Eritrea), Josiah Tongogara (ZANU, Zimbabwe), Amilcar Cabral (PAIGC, Guinea-Bissau), Eduardo Mondlane (FRELIMO, Mozambique), Mohamed Farah Aideed (USC, Somalia), Fred Rwigyema (RPF, Rwanda), and Jonas Savimbi (MPLA, Angola)[15]. Most of these deaths had an impact on the outcome of the conflict (Herbst, 2000).

Additionally, a research agenda on rebel leader survival sits well with the methodological individualism of rational choice theory. Focusing on rebel leaders and their incentives can help increase explanatory variation (Jones and Olken, 2005; de Marchi, 2005). Common explanatory variables such as capabilities, ethnic fractionalization, regime type,

[14] Chiozza and Goemans (2011) demonstrate that about one-third of the variation in interstate conflict derives from the personal characteristics and attributes of leaders (p. 201).

[15] In Angola, an end to decades of civil war was only accomplished after the death of rebel leader Jonas Savimbi in early 2002.

economic indicators, and contiguity change too little, if at all, to account for dynamic phenomena such as civil war. An emphasis on leader characteristics introduces more variation, as leaders vary considerably in some important political and individual characteristics and their time and behavior in office.

Considering these potential benefits, the following chapter will be an attempt to fill this gap and to offer a contribution to the so far limited literature on rebel leaders. Given the lack of theoretical and empirical development in this area, it will first put forth a theoretical framework that investigates the potential factors having an impact on leader survival. The hypotheses then will be tested with new data on rebel leaders.

CHAPTER III.

REBEL LEADER SURVIVAL, RELATIVE REBEL STRENGTH, AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT IN CIVIL CONFLICT

Rebel leaders, by definition, lead insurgencies, and their survival, in many cases, largely depends on the survival of their organizations. This, however, does not necessarily imply that rebel leaders are not survival-driven individuals who weigh their personal benefits and costs generated by conflict dynamics. They, on the contrary, have to "fight" for survival just as some of their state leader counterparts who are at risk of being forcibly removed from power. This is because this group of leaders must consider not just the probability, but also consequences of losing power (Goemans, 2000; Chiozza and Goemans, 2011). The potential individual-level costs of failure to keep their hold on power are not limited to "just the loss of leadership", which actually very rarely happens when it comes to rebel leaders.[16]

However, despite this overlapping, it is hard to argue that the requirements of staying in power for rebel leaders entirely corresponds with the ones for state leaders operating in non-democracies. While rebel leaders naturally have to be concerned primarily with the success of

[16] This is a strong generalization. There are, of course, some exceptions where rebel group members elect their leaders. Especially, the rebel groups operating as a fraction of a political party (Maoist, Communist etc.) tend to be led by an elected leader, although the election process mostly takes place in authoritarian norms. In this sense, the way rebel leadership changes hands in most cases substantially overlaps with the way some state leaders lose office through the process called "irregular removal" primarily observed in non-democracies (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza, 2009).

their movement at civil war, state leaders must have a much wider agenda to take into consideration (*e.g.* state of the economy, domestic political conditions, foreign policy etc.). Furthermore, these two groups of leaders perform under different structures largely defined by (lack of) institutions, and autocratic state leaders can be held accountable domestically to some extent for their decisions (Weeks, 2008), while rebel leaders are relatively more autonomous.

This autonomy of rebel leaders, though, does not come with ease in power. Pearlman (2010) contends that:

> *Even when a movement has an official leadership, a spectrum of persons beyond leaders plays a role in shaping the movement's course of action. Moreover, the context in which adherents of a movement make decisions that affect the movement is usually multidimensional. They have opinions about issues relating to strategy, the proper procedures for reaching collective decisions, how decisions are implemented, and how the movement's resources are distributed (p. 201-202).*

In this respect, rebel leaders have to elaborate the issues that may stem from their relations with rebel elites, including the allocation of material and rewards, distribution of duties, and strategy implementation. In other words, rebel leader survival has an in-group dimension as well as conflict-level aspects since most rebels tend to attach more importance to their movements than their leaders even when they are led by the founder of their organization (Tiernay, 2015).

This chapter aims to develop a theory of rebel leader survival by addressing the applicability of the insights provided by the studies on state leaders. Following the theoretical discussion, I examine primarily the effects of relative rebel strength and external support on the hazard of rebel leader removal. I use new data on rebel leaders to test whether and how these variables influence rebel leader survival.

The theoretical discussion is broken up into two sections: First, I focus on theories of leader survival from the literature on state leaders, and on where the overlapping between state and rebel leader survival can be found. The second section discusses the effects of relative rebel strength and external support to belligerents on rebel leader survival.

Leader Survival: How Rebel Leaders and Autocrat State Leaders Extend Their Tenure

Studies of political science have recognized the argument that leaders do what they do to stay in power. They choose and employ policies and strategies that maximize their tenure. This incentive of rebel leaders may look different from the one of state leaders as it is accompanied with the rebel leaders' desire to gain legitimate political power. Achieving that for a rebel leader, though, still highly depends on his ability to stay in power and achieve the goals of his rebel movement. To put it differently, staying in power for a rebel leader can be considered as a prerequisite of gaining legitimate political power. As Chiozza and Goemans (2011) contend, leaders choose their policies and strategies based not just on the likelihood but on the costs of losing power.[17]

The survival-driven leader assumption is enormously influential in the studies on state leaders, and the scholarly work concentrates chiefly on the domestic dynamics. In their seminal work, Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) contend that every political system includes a "winning coalition" (W) that refers to "a subset of the selectorate of sufficient size such that the subset's support endows the leadership with political power over the remainder of the electorate as well

[17] They find that over 80% of the leaders who experienced forcible removal from office were either exiled (41%), jailed (23%), or killed (17%) (p. 51). It's safe to assume that the hazard of being killed for rebel leaders is much higher given that in most cases they lose power due to their death.

as over the disenfranchised members of the society" (p. 51). Most democratic systems tend to have a large W, while non-democracies generally contain a small W. *Selectorate theory* draws the underlying distinction between these two sets of regime types by asserting that leaders in large W systems survive by providing more public goods to all members of society, while leaders in systems with small W tend to survive by providing private goods and/or rewards to only their elites. As Morrow et al. (2008) point out, autocrats center on the purchase of the loyalty of key supporters.

The selectorate theory describes relevant sets of people within any polity. "[…] Nested within the *residents* of all polities is a *selectorate* and within that there is a *winning coalition*. *Leaders*, all of whom face *challengers* who wish to depose them, maintain their coalitions of supporters by taxing and spending in ways that allocate mixes of public and private goods." (de Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 37).

The theory bases its analysis on the assumption that the ultimate goal of any leader is to gain and retain power. Leaders use their resources to obtain the combination of public and private goods that will best help them to please the W so that their W will remain loyal and ensure that they stay in power (de Mesquita et al., 2003).

The system in which a leader is operating can have a dramatic effect on the type of goods that the leader distributes, as well as the ratio of private goods to public goods. In a democracy with a large population, the W is extremely large since leaders have to have support of a large number of voters to gain power. Given that private goods cost much more per person, the leaders' best interest is to provide a large amount of public goods to keep their large W satisfied. A satisfied W continue to keep the leader in power, but due to the fact that the public goods are not as motivating as the private goods would be, they are prone to changes in support in case a

challenger comes into play who pledges superior public and/or private goods (de Mesquita et al., 2003).

Autocratic governments, on the other hand, generate smaller Ws. In this type of governmental setting, the W consists only of the few individuals who maintain the leader's power, such as a few financially powerful backers or personal guards to prevent a coup. In this case, it would be best interest of the leader to distribute private goods to the few relevant individuals that play the most important role in keeping them in power. Thus, as far as the selectorate theory suggests, by relying on as few key people to keep them in power as possible, leaders follow the primary rule of governing (de Mesquita, 2010). The small size of the group motivates the members of the W to sustain their support for their leader so they can carry on accessing to private goods. In other words, as long as the W is small and well satisfied with private goods, the leader has little incentive to provide public goods to the rest of their selectorate (de Mesquita et al., 2003).

The setting of selectorate theory, and thus its function as a tool for understanding authoritarian politics can apply to the intrastate realm to some extent. Naturally, rebel leaders may not have a selectorate in the same way as state leaders do since rebels operate under a different structure of organization. Furthermore, in most cases, the difference between the selectorate and the winning coalition in rebel groups is not as clear-cut as in some autocratic states. In autocracies, some leaders "are accountable to a restrictive group of interests, while others are accountable to a selectorate composed of members of the governing apparatus" (Gallagher and Hanson, 2014). Rebel leaders, on the other hand, fight their war with a quite narrow inner circle consisting of "rebel elites" which, as a group, may stand for the winning

coalition in rebel organizations. However, this does not necessarily mean that civil conflicts lack a group of people to whom rebel leaders have an incentive and interest in providing public goods.

Rebel groups generally claim public goods as their goals, with concessions, regime change, autonomy, democratization, redistribution etc. (Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007). Yet, providing public goods (especially security) to civilians during the conflict may play a key role in the course of civil war, although rebels are mostly restricted to provide the public goods that state leaders can offer such as education, health, and welfare programs. In Sri Lanka, Prabhakaran, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), managed to offer a considerable extent of public goods to the civilian population, and, in return, enjoyed a mass civilian support. Wamba, the leader of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), on the other hand, failed to provide security to civilian population in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and the organization "suffered a deep crisis of legitimacy as a result" (Mampilly, 2011). Therefore, since the fate of rebel leaders are tightly coupled with the fate of their rebellion, leaders may need to consider providing public goods to the civilian population even though civilians do not have a direct role in selecting rebel leaders. In other words, despite the difference in the context and the nature of the relationship, civilians are the most relevant group to being the selectorate for rebel leaders.

Although some victorious rebel elites manage to ascend to the highest state positions after the war while others reach only subaltern offices, they all fight for political power. Civil wars initiate dynamics of social mobility, so social groups and individuals may rise or fall. Depending upon their territorial and temporal nature, civil wars can cause wide-ranging changes in the social stratification of a society and its elite structure (Maleseivic, 2010). Rebel groups are not an exception of this social dynamic, and the elite formation in rebel groups, therefore, is

multidimensional. As in most political structures, the elites in rebel groups rely highly on their capital. As Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) conceptualize, elites' capital takes some different forms; each refers to specific means of power or resources. Some elites gain the status simply through their economic capital (wealth), which can be crucial for the success of the rebellion. Some elites have a strong social capital, which enables them to provide the rebel movement with their personal relations, informal networks, or external ties. Cultural capital can be another form that some rebel elites offer to the rebellion, which consists of education, relevant training and/or background, recruitment skills, and efficient strategies (Bourdieu, 1998).

Rebel elites generally gain prominence within the rebellion in their leaders' early tenure. Thus, rebel leaders have to heavily consider keeping their small W "happy" throughout the war in order to extend their time in power. Rebel leaders can do this in two ways. In conflicts where they fight against resource-rich governments, or where their rebellion is financially supported by a third-party, they can allow their elites to benefit from the rewards that take place during conflict (Humphreys, 2005). Thus, financial rewards may secure the elite support to rebel leaders and help them to get more consolidated in power.

However, most rebel groups are not blessed with economic endowments, and rebel leaders may have to rely on commitments where their ability to provide financial rewards falls short. When rebels can manage at least not to lose--to achieve negotiated settlements or military victory, the post-war order may give the rebel elites significant opportunities for political careers. Hence, when rebel leaders are not able to grant financial rewards to their elites, they tend to "sell the future" to maintain the elite support for their leadership. In these cases, the larger portion of private rewards for Ws is mostly expected to be the loot of victory (Weinstein, 2005).

Despite its importance, gaining support of their small Ws is not enough for rebel leaders to stay in power. To survive, they need an arsenal of arms and ammunition; a group of determined recruits to mount and maintain the rebellion; resources to feed, equip, and finance the insurgency; and training to improve the effectiveness of rebel soldiers (Weinstein, 2005). Rebel leaders mostly struggle to implement all these conditions during the war, and, at this point, external factors may come into play.

The research on state leader survival has some insights to offer on this external aspect of survival as well. Relying highly on selectorate theory, a growing body of literature directly deals with the link between a form of external support (aid) and leader survival. A number of studies overlap in the reasoning they exhibit to support their argument that leaders who are responsible only to a small W, and thus motivated for extended tenure through providing private rewards, tend to be appreciative of external resource flows (Lai and Morey, 2006; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2007; 2009). An extension of the selectorate model demonstrates that autocratic leaders are assisted by external aid only in the long term (Kono and Montinola, 2009).

The most direct means by which external support could benefit leaders is by supplying additional resources for application to their common survival-seeking activities. A static view of institutions contributes to this insight by suggesting that autocratic leaders will benefit more from external support. As they are less constrained by institutional checks, and responsible to a narrow population, external support applies directly into the tenure extension activities of small Ws (Licht, 2010).[18]

In addition to these in-group and external dynamics of rebel leader survival, it should be noted, again, that rebel leaders' tenure highly depends on the course of conflict. Tiernay (2015)

[18] Democratic leaders, however, institutionally constrained and obligated to at least a plurality of the voting population, have relatively little to gain and much to lose from external assistance (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999).

finds that civil wars are four times more likely to end when the rebel leader of a rebel group is captured or killed, and that most rebel groups do not suffer from substantial military failure prior to leadership removal. These findings reveal that governments tend to attach a priority to capturing or killing rebel leaders to end the conflict. In juxtaposition to their in-group concerns regarding their tenure, therefore, rebel leaders also have to be successful in the battlefield to secure their leadership. While doing so, most importantly, they have to stay alive.

Although the literature on state leaders has been expanded over recent decades, the growing literature on civil conflict largely lacks an empirical investigation of rebel leader survival. Individual-level variation, and rebel leaders in particular, have been largely underemphasized. Hence, a focus on the survival-driven incentives of individual leaders holds much promise for an analysis of rebel leaders.

I, therefore, develop theoretical arguments in the next section by highlighting the potential effects of external support to belligerents and relative rebel strength on rebel leader survival. I test my arguments on a dataset of 708 rebel leader-years covering 154 separate leaders from 1991 to 2008, estimating a Cox proportional hazard model that accounts for the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders throughout the civil conflict. The analysis suggests that government-biased external support and relative rebel strength play a significant role in the hazard of rebel leader turnover.

External Support, Rebel Strength, and Rebel Leader Survival

My theoretical argument draws on the assumptions of selectorate theory (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005). I assume that rebel leaders are rational and survival-driven, acting so as to stay in power as long as possible. Since their secondary, individual-level political goals cannot

be obtained without this prior condition, leaders always have the incentive to decrease their risk of losing power. These survival-seeking incentives gets stronger as the risk of losing power increases since a removal would be highly likely to result in being killed or jailed. In most cases, we might expect rebel leaders to be killed or heavily punished for their "crimes", rather than fleeing safely, while low-level combatants may be allowed to reintegrate into society.[19]

All leaders owe their tenure to a winning coalition whose support is critical to overcome political challenges (*e.g.* fighting a civil war). As the selectorate theory points out, the size of this winning coalition is determined by states' political institutions. Given that rebel groups are relatively smaller organizations with smaller winning coalitions, the survival problem, for all rebel leaders, involves a satisfying setting that maximizes the utility of the winning coalition through private goods and/or rewards.

Most empirical analyses of leader survival, such as those focusing on winning coalitions, mainly concentrate on domestic variables. They put the emphasis on institutions, state capacity, economic indicators, and time in office (Bienen and van de Walle, 1992; Londregan and Poole, 1990; Chiozza and Choi, 2003). Recent scholarship attributes explanatory power to leaders' experience for investigation of conflict behavior (Gelpi and Grieco, 2001; Chiozza and Choi, 2003; Wolford, 2007). The literature on diversionary war, rally effects, and casualties posit that decisions to involve in conflict affect leader duration through domestic approval (Mitchell and Prins, 2004; Lai and Reiter, 2005). Research in this vein reveals the conditioning of the negative effect of military and economic conflict on leader survival by target regime type (Chiozza and Goemans 2003, 2004; McGillivray and Smith 2006).

[19] Some scholars argue that rebel leaders have the resources and connections to safely flee the area if defeat becomes inevitable, while the low-level combatants are at the mercy of the victors (Kinder and Hilgemann, 1978). Ultimately, this is an empirical question that has yet to be addressed by the literature.

Despite the clear influences of internal forces, however, plenty of room remains for external factors to affect leader tenure. In many cases, some in-group dynamics of rebel leadership, such as providing rewards to elites, can be driven in part by out-group factors. Civil conflicts are not always conducted on a domestic basis and often have no precise temporal or spatial boundaries. Although the concept "civil conflict" seems to refer to some sort of domestic process, internal conflicts often have a significant external dimension attached to them. Most civil conflicts, even those that have been driven mostly by internal forces (*e.g.* Peru, Lebanon) are not entirely exempt from external influences (Weinstein, 2007; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). They tend to be conditioned in various degrees by regional and global factors, as well as third-party involvement/support, at multiple stages of their transition process. They can attract third-party attention and intervention, and transform to internationalized conflicts where the borderlines of conflict are not always as clear-cut as in interstate wars (Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, and Joyce, 2008; Regan, 1998; 2002).

No matter in what form, it is explicit that the prominence of external support in civil conflicts could not be neglected. Employing a fairly generic definition of civil conflicts and of external involvements, Regan (2002) demonstrates that 89 (out of 138) civil conflicts since World War II had at least one third party intervention, and that within these 89 conflicts there were a total of 190 cases of individual involvements.

A large and growing body of research has emphasized the importance of understanding both the causes and the effects of external involvement in civil war (Regan, 2002; Balch-Lindsay and Enterline, 2000; Collier et al. 2003; Bapat, 2006; Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, 2011). Scholars of civil conflict have demonstrated that external support for sides changes the dynamics of the conflict itself. Civil wars with external involvement typically last longer (Regan,

2002), lead to more fatalities (Heger and Salehyan, 2007), and are more difficult to settle through negotiations (Cunningham, 2010). Thus, external involvements, in a sense, introduce new actors into the civil conflict with interests and strategies of their own, changing the underlying dynamic of the conflict for both state and non-state actors (Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, 2011). Investigating how external support influences rebel leaders' risk of losing power is therefore critical for understanding how some of the externally driven dynamics of civil war provide formidable challenges for rebel leaders to overcome to extend their tenure.

Most rebel movements lack the necessary economic and military strength to challenge governments effectively. Although diamonds and other lootable resources play a key role in many civil conflicts that motivate the literature (e.g., Angola, Congo, and Sierra Leone), some rebel groups have to organize their rebellion in environments lacking an economic base (e.g., Ethiopia, Uganda, and Rwanda). In these contexts, rebel leaders face the logistical demands of insurgency through means other than the mobilization of material wealth. Then, they have to employ appeals to ethnic or class solidarity, nationalist sentiments, and local social ties to determine the recruits and resources necessary to fight against the governments (Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Sambanis, 2001).

Rebel leaders' ability of making use of any support that an external party provides can be pivotal for the success of a rebellion organization since resources strengthen the hand of the insurgency relative to the government. Being supported by an external party surely bolsters the resistance and morale of rebels (Collier et al. 2003). Besides, external support may allow rebel leaders to provide private rewards to their small Ws, which is crucial to decrease the hazard of removal. Similarly, rebel groups enjoying external support are more likely to be able to provide public goods to the civilian population located in the areas controlled by rebels.

External support to rebels, therefore, can play a crucial role in the chance of success for both rebel leaders and their rebellion by alleviating these difficulties that rebel leaders have to overcome. We can thereby expect that having external support to their rebel group may have a negative effect on the hazard of rebel leader removal. I propose the following hypothesis for empirical testing:

Hypothesis 1. *All else being equal, when rebel movements are supported by an external party, the hazard of losing power for their leaders decreases.*

The flip side of coin, fighting against a government, which is externally supported, however, can easily be a risk-increaser for rebel leaders. In general, governments have much more military capability than rebels, and that is why they mostly do not need external support. When the balance of power approaches to parity, though, governments are more likely to appreciate third-party involvements. Once supported externally, governments tend to look for solutions to conflicts in fighting rather than negotiated settlements (Regan and Aydin, 2006), which increases the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders.

Furthermore, government-biased external support somehow influences the initial relationship within the conflict in favor of governments who already hold a structural advantage over rebel groups. Most civil conflicts are framed by juridical sovereignty, and even stronger rebels face certain limitations as government incumbents control the capital.[20] Most governments

[20] Andre Matsangaissa, the first leader of the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), which fought a civil war against the government in Mozambique from 1975 to 1992, did not survive very long despite the explicit and strong external support to his rebellion by South Africa, Kenya, Rhodesia, and Malawi. Nordstrom (1992) even describes the RENAMO as a particularly lethal rebel group formed by foreign powers intent on destabilizing the country, and responsible for over 90 percent of the brutality committed. Moreover, the RENAMO was a well-

are blessed with legitimacy and sovereignty, an extensive resource base, and infrastructure giving them a structural upper hand against rebels (Balch-Lindsay and Enterline, 2000).

Moreover, even in cases where rebels are stronger than government forces, external involvements favoring governments are likely to be driven by interveners' concerns about political and economic instability in the region, which makes it a lot harder for a rebel leader to fight the civil war, and increases the risk of turnover (Murdoch and Sandler, 2002; Regan and Aydin, 2006).[21] As stability-seeker third-parties tend to be after a shorter conflict, and conflicts are most likely to come to an end when rebel leaders are captured or killed (Tiernay, 2015), the potential military strategies of government forces which are supported by these parties can put rebel leaders in danger of arrest or death. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2*. All else being equal, when rebels fight against a government supported by an external party, the hazard of losing power for their leaders increases.*

The other prospective factor that may drive the variation in rebel leader survival is the strength of the rebel group. Conflicts with stronger rebel groups are more likely to be settled through a peace agreement, or result in rebel victory (Cunningham et al. 2009; Gent, 2008). Stronger rebels are more likely to win battles, pose credible challenges, and, therefore, be in a

established organization with a considerable level of popular support, and quite stronger than the Mozambican government militarily (Chingono, 1996).

[21] Ndikumana and Emizet (2003) argue that in Congo, the government's ability to face the rebellion depended almost entirely on its external support more than on its own economic capacity.

better position to extract concessions from the government (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, 2009.)[22]

Given that civil conflicts are dyadic interactions between states and rebel groups, emphasizing this dyadic component is crucial to accurately assess the dynamics underpinning civil conflict (Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala, 2009; Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan, 2009). In this sense, a growing literature on civil conflict recognizes the importance of the influence of relative power/capabilities within conflict. The strength of warring parties is related to a wide variety of factors, including the military size, equipment, location, experience, and leadership structure of an armed force (DeRouen and Sobek, 2004). However, the strength of a warring party is relatively less important than its strength in comparison to its opponent (Clayton, 2013). The Gambian and Mozambican governments, for example, were militarily weaker than the NRC and the RENAMO, and they were backed by the interventions of Nigeria and Zimbabwe, respectively, as secondary warring parties. Yet, when the external forces left the territory of target states, the distribution of power became more favorable for the rebels in relation to the governments.

As the balance of power between rebel groups and governments becomes more uneven in favor of governments, the likelihood for rebels to face collective action problems increases. "Facing a highly unequal balance of capabilities, […] rebels that lack the capacity to provide at least nominal protection, if not other selective benefits, to supporters face comparatively greater difficulties mobilizing resources" (Wood, 2010).

Few rebel groups have the mobilization capacity and technological equipment required to militarily challenge the state. The PKK in Turkey, for example, and the GIA in Algeria are

[22] However, as the historical record reveals, the success of a rebellion and a rebel leader does not vary together in every conflict. Some rebel groups manage to survive for decades despite the frequent leadership turnover (*e.g.* GIA, Hamas, Sendero Luminoso, CNDD-FDD).

highly likely to remain relatively weaker than the target states. Nevertheless, rebel groups with significant mobilization and organization skills and strong leadership structures are able to reach to the point that they compete with incumbent forces (*e.g.* FAN in Chad, HUK in Philippines).[23]

In this sense, we would expect that leaders of rebel groups with larger capabilities are more likely to stay in power since the chance of success for those is relatively higher, which leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. *All else being equal, when their group is at parity with or stronger than the government, the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders decreases.*

That some rebel leaders failed to remain in power despite external involvements favoring them, and strong groups they lead, raises important questions about the relationship between external support, relative rebel strength, and rebel leader survival. If rebel leaders are still at risk of losing power even with explicit external support and strong rebel forces, what can be the driving factor(s) behind this risk for rebel leaders? Do conflict-oriented characteristics or belligerent-oriented notions have more explanatory power? These questions link individual-level phenomena to the group/state dynamics of warfare, and are largely ignored by the growing literature on civil conflict.

Following is the presentation of the research design and the empirical data analysis. The final part includes a brief discussion of the key findings and future research avenues.

[23] In very rare cases in which the state is notably weak, rebel strength overtops that of the government (*e.g.* NPFL in Liberia).

Research Design

The data upon which the hypotheses are tested consist of 708 leader years covering 154 separate rebel leaders from 1991 to 2008. I collected new data on these leaders from multiple resources including databases of prominent leaders, conflict-specific encyclopedias, individual biographies, and the UNCTAD reports. The event history data grounding the dataset come from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (v.4-2013). The data on external support and battle deaths are also extracted from the UCDP External Support Data and the UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset (v.5-2013), respectively. The relative rebel strength part of the data comes from Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2009).

I use a Cox proportional hazard framework to test the relationship between the variables of interest and rebel leader survival. The robustness and advantages of Cox proportional hazards are well established (Therneau and Grambsch, 2000; Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 1997, 2004). Since the Cox models do not specify a parametric form for the baseline hazard, they produce unbiased results under a variety of specifications. The method is also the most common used in previous analyses of leadership survival across countries and regime types. (Bienen and van de Walle, 1991; Chiozza and Goemans, 2004; Colaresi, 2004). The Cox models make the fewest superfluous assumptions about the data (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 1997, 2004). Hence, they are the most logical method for testing the external support theory measures, averting criticisms of divergence arising due to model selection.

The empirical findings are presented as hazard ratios. These represent the proportionate increase or decrease in the baseline hazard of a rebel leader losing power. Numbers above 1 indicate that a one point increase in the independent variable increases the chance of a rebel leader's removal. A hazard ratio of 1.11, for instance, indicates that a one point increase in the

independent variable increases the probability of a rebel leader's removal by 11 percent. Similarly, a score of 0.97 suggests that a one point increase in the independent variable decreases the probability of rebel leadership turnover by 3 percent (97 percent of the baseline hazard).

To test the hypotheses on relative rebel strength, external support and rebel leader survival, I estimate a series of hazard models in which the dependent variable measures the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders. One extension that is needed to be added to the Cox hazard modeling is accounting for nonproportional hazards (Box-Steffensmeier, Reiter, and Zorn, 2003). The Cox hazard model relies on the key assumption of proportional hazards that regardless of when it occurs in the event history of a subject, a change in an independent variable has an influence on the hazard, which is proportional and constant over time (Chiozza and Goemans, 2004). Although this strong assumption might serve analysts well in a large range of research, it is also an assumption that should not be granted without any specification checks.

The effects of independent variables might increase or decrease over time, thereby altering the conditions under which a process or an event terminates. Neglecting to control for time-varying effects, therefore, might not only lead to a failure in determining the political dynamics that underlie leader survival, but also lead to biased and inefficient estimates. Hence, I run the relevant specification tests based on the analysis of the scaled Schoenfeld residuals for all the models I estimate (Grambsch and Therneau, 1994).[24]

The key independent variables, external support to government and external support to rebels (binary; 0/1), identify the existence of any form of external support including funding/economic support, providing weapons and/or material logistics, offering training and/or

[24] The Grambsch and Therneau global test employs the maximum of the absolute cumulative summed Schoenfeld residuals and tests whether the model as a whole indicates any violation of proportional hazards assumption. Harrell's rho, on the other hand, is a statistical test for proportional hazards relying on the Schoenfeld residuals for each covariate (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 2004).

expertise, and fighting war as a secondary party by sending troops; while relative rebel strength is a binary variable that measures the strength of the rebels in relation to the state, coding the existence of rebel groups which are weaker (0) than or at least at parity (1) with governments.[25]

I also include a set of control variables standing for the factors that may potentially affect rebel leader survival. Civil conflicts are dynamic processes, and the temporal dimension of them may highly matter for rebel leader survival. *Cumulative intensity*, an indicator coming from UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Data, takes this dimension into account, and it is therefore commonly used in the literature on civil conflict. The variable takes on a value of 1 if the conflict ever exceeded 1,000 battle-related deaths since the onset, and 0 otherwise. There is an interaction between intensity of conflict and strategies of warfare that rebel leaders choose to employ.

Number of active rebel groups measures the number of rebel organizations actively involved in conflict by fighting against government simultaneously. An increase in the number of rebel groups fighting against government might decrease the hazard rate of losing power for rebel leaders, since government incumbents would have to deal with more than one rebel movements at the same time.

Besides conflict-oriented factors, some state-related aspects may also influence rebel leader survival. The prevailing scholarly wisdom is that states that repress their citizens are the most likely to generate dissident violence and to experience a civil war. The regime characteristics of states and potential audience costs on government incumbents might matter to rebel leaders in that they would try to extort concessions by employing warfare strategies to stalemate incumbent states that might in turn make rebel leaders more secure in power. This is more likely to happen when incumbent states are not autocracies. *Autocracy* variable comes

[25] The data are extracted from the three-point scale of Cunningham. Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2009).

from the Polity IV Project that uses institutional characteristics to assign an authoritarian/democracy score on a scale from -10 to 10. It is coded 1 if the target state's score is below -5, and 0 otherwise.

Ethnic divisions play a central role in the literature on civil conflict. However, not all ethnically divided countries evolve into civil conflict (Reynal-Querol, 2002). When they do, on the other hand, ethnic diversity might be in favor of survival-driven rebel leaders. Ethnically motivated conflicts are predominantly due to political rather than economic grievances (Sambanis, 2001). When economic expectations of recruits do not impose costs on rebel leaders, they might enjoy longer tenures. However, leaders of ethically divided rebel groups can face collective action problems and the risk of removal from their position. I control for *ethnic fractionalization*, using data from Fearon and Laitin (2003), measures the probability that two randomly selected individuals from a population belong to different groups.

Finally, *oil production per capita* includes annual oil production estimates divided by population (thousand tons) (Wimmer and Min, 2006). The measure of oil wealth is correlated with the onset of civil war (Ross 2004), and it is considered to play a key role in financing conflicts. In Angolan civil war, the secure oil rent allowed the MPLA party to wage a long and violent civil war against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) since the 1970s (Billon, 2007). As Ross (2008) points out, "oil wealth often wreaks havoc on a country's economy and politics, makes it easier for insurgents to fund their rebellions, and aggravates ethnic grievances." On the other hand, whether incumbent states have oil resources might affect the strategies that rebel leaders have to employ, thereby influencing the risk of losing power for rebel leaders. Oil is likely to make rebel leaders more greedy and aggressive since controlling oil resources can allow them to pay off their W. Furthermore, the trajectory of

civil war in oil-rich countries are likely to persuade rebel leaders that they cannot fully enjoy political control, or even political concessions without controlling oil resources adequately. This sort of incentive may lead to risky insurgency tactics, which, in turn, may increase the hazard of rebel leader removal since oil-dependent states would be much more determined to defend their resources. Besides, oil extraction is not an entirely internally driven process. In most conflict-prone oil-rich countries, the extraction is managed by the multinational corporations having strong relationships with state elites based on mutual interests. This may work against rebels, and also rebel leaders, in many ways, such as in gaining international support to their movement.

Data Analysis

I estimate five models: Model 1 assesses the effect of relative rebel strength on rebel leader survival. Model 2 focuses on whether, and how, external support to rebel groups influences the hazard of rebel leader removal, while Model 3 deals with the potential impact of external government-biased support on the risk of losing power for rebel leaders. Model 4 estimates the overall effects of three key explanatory variables on the hazard of rebel leader removal. Finally, the fully specified model, Model 5, includes all explanatory and control variables.

Table 1 reports the findings. The hazard ratios measure the impact of the variables on the hazard of losing power. Thus, the hazard ratios larger than 1 imply that as an independent variable increases the hazard of rebel leader removal increases and expected time in power decreases, while the hazard ratios smaller than 1 imply that as an independent variable increases the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders decreases and expected time in power increases.

Before discussing the effects of the explanatory variables on the hazard of losing power, I briefly mention the inclusion of the time-interaction variables to correct for non-proportionality. In Model 2, both the global and the variable-specific tests for non-proportionality yielded large and highly significant ($p < .024$) test statistics, clearly indicating a violation of the proportional hazards assumption. In the variable-specific tests for Model 4 and 5, the variable *external support to rebels* appears to cause the variable-specific violation ($p < .054$ and $p < .056$, respectively), while the global tests did not show any evidence of non-proportionality for the models as a whole.

I correct for non-proportionality by interacting the offending covariates with the natural log of time in the models 2, 4, and 5. The relative size and sign of the interaction and offending variable's coefficients indicate the rate at which the variable's effect moves over time. When the interaction term has the same sign as the offending variable's coefficient, the initial effect magnifies over time. "A small interaction term coefficient relative to the constitutive term coefficient indicates slow change. When the coefficients have opposing signs, exponentiating the ratio of the coefficients provides the value of time when the estimated effect flips from positive to negative or vice versa" (Licht, 2011, p. 235).

Turning our attention back to the effects of explanatory variables presented in Table 1, we can notice that the effect of relative rebel strength on the risk of losing power for rebel leaders just slightly fails to be significant (with a *p-value* of 0.11). As the hazard ratio indicates, leading a rebel group which is at parity with or stronger than the government decreases the probability of a rebel leader's removal by 80 percent. Although the direction of the effect is in line with the Hypothesis 3, we must note that the effect is not statistically significant.

Table 1. Cox proportional hazards modeling for rebel leader survival

	Model 1 (Relative Rebel Strength)		Model 2 (External Rebel-Biased Support)		Model 3 (External Gov.-Biased Support)		Model 4 (Key Explanatory Variables)		Model 5 (Fully-Specified)	
	Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	P Value	Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	P Value	Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	P Value	Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	P Value	Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	P Value
Relative Rebel Strength	0.20 (0.03 – 1.46)	0.112					0.19 (0.03 – 1.41)	0.105	0.18 (0.23 – 1.37)	0.097
External Support to Rebels			1.56 (0.61 – 3.95)	0.352			1.13 (0.44 – 2.92)	0.800	1.16 (0.44 – 3.05)	0.761
External Support to Government					2.59 (1.41 – 4.74)	0.002	2.62 (1.41 – 4.87)	0.002	2.39 (1.19 – 4.84)	0.015
Log (Length of time) X External Support to Rebels			0.59 (0.29 – 1.19)	0.138			0.65 (0.32 – 1.33)	0.241	0.64 (0.31 – 1.33)	0.234
Cumulative Intensity									1.37 (0.58 – 3.25)	0.468
Number of Active Rebel Groups									0.92 (0.62 – 1.35)	0.662
Autocracy									1.40 (0.69 – 2.83)	0.352
Ethno-Linguistic Fractionalization									0.51 (0.18 – 1.46)	0.207
Oil Production									1.28 (1.02 – 1.60)	0.030
N	708		708		708		708		708	
Log likelihood	– 194.1125		– 195.1035		– 191.2716		– 187.8831		– 184.6835	
Prob > chi^2	0.0357		0.2971		0.0015		0.0021		0.0056	

In Model 2, external rebel-biased support appears to have a negative effect on rebel leader survival. However, this coefficient is not statistically significant. As Table 1 presents, external government-biased support appears as the only variable with a statistically significant effect when estimated in a model on its own. The hazard ratio in Model 3 reveals that the hazard of removal for rebel leaders increases 2.6 (*hr* of 2.59) times when the government has externally support, and this effect is highly significant with a *p-value* of 0.002. This finding shows a very strong support for the Hypothesis 2. To be more precise about the significance of this effect, though, we should see how the variable performs in the fully specified model with the other explanatory variables included.

Model 4 includes all three key explanatory variables. The first thing to notice in the model is that the effects of the variables measuring the relative rebel strength and external government-biased support remain substantially identical across Model 4 and the variable-specific models. The hazard ratio and the statistical significance of the effect by relative rebel strength slightly changes, so that being at parity with or stronger than the government decreases the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders by 81%, and this effect misses being of statistically significance very slightly ($p < 0.105$). The variable measuring the effect of external support to government also remains almost identical: The hazard of removal for rebel leaders increases 2.6 (*hr* of 2.62) times when they fight against a government externally supported, and this effect is statistically significant ($p < 0.002$). As in Model 2, the variable of external support to rebels appears to have a positive effect on the hazard of rebel leader removal. However, the effect is, again, far away from being statistically significant with a *p-value* of 0.80. The time-interaction term as well shows a very similar effect, and fails to be statistically significant ($p < 0.24$),

suggesting that rebel-biased external support has no statistically significant effect on rebel leader survival.

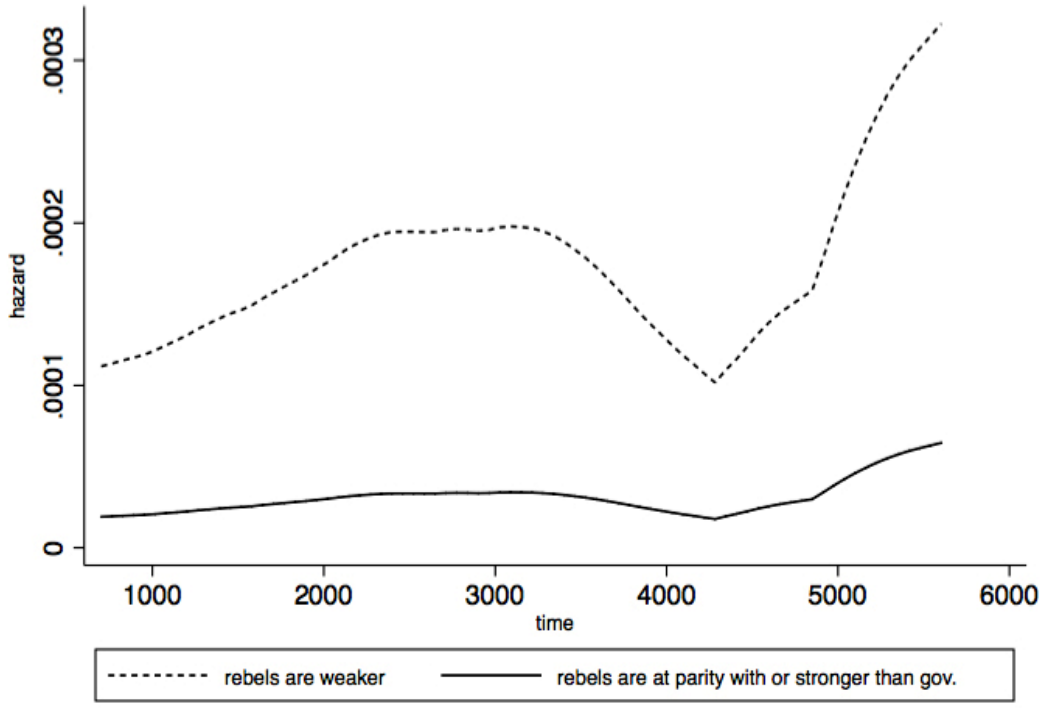
Finally, Table 1 also reports the findings of the fully specified model that includes all key explanatory and control variables. The major change occurs with the effect of the variable measuring the strength of rebels in relation to the government, as its negative impact on the hazard of removal for rebel leaders becomes statistically significant ($p < 0.097$). The positive and statistically significant coefficient for *relative rebel strength* indicates that leading a rebel organization which is at parity with or stronger than the government decreases the probability of a rebel leader's removal by 82 percent. This finding supports the Hypothesis 3, and suggests that not leading a rebel group with very limited capabilities allows rebel leaders to stay in power for a longer period of time. Even when rebels are stronger than government forces, rebel leaders' tenure, of course, can still be at stake due to the structural disadvantages faced by rebels or some other external involvements favoring governments. Figure 1 presents the estimated baseline hazard function for rebel leaders depending on their organization's strength compared to the government.[26] The figure demonstrates that, all else being equal, the chances of losing power for a rebel leader who leads forces that can cope with government's are quite smaller than those lead relatively weaker forces, and this effect is consistent over time.

As in the RENAMO example, leading a strong rebel group may not be enough for a rebel leader to survive. However, this finding, at least partly, explains what observe in many civil conflicts in which rebel leaders stay in power for a very long time. Aside from some well-known cases, such as Kagame (Rwandan Patriotic Front/RPF), Prince Johnson (Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia/INPFL) or Charles Taylor (National Patriotic Front of Liberia/NPFL),

[26] For each figure, the estimated hazard function is calculated based on the modal values for discrete variables, and the mean values for the continuous variable.

in Djibouti, Ahmed Dini Ahmed led the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FURD) for over a decade mostly relying on the strength of his rebel organization. Likewise, Mohamed Farah Aidid led the United Somalia Congress-Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) for a long time until the rebels forced the UN forces to abandon the country in 1995.

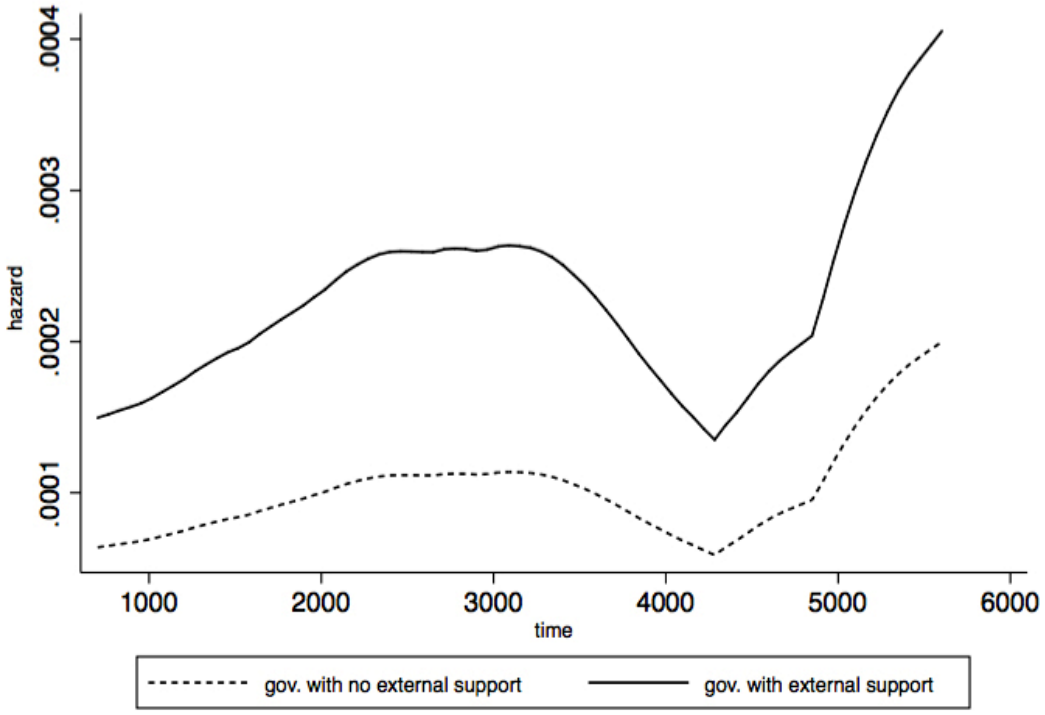
Figure 1. The hazard of losing power for rebel leaders across relative rebel strength



Turning to the finding corresponding to *external support to government*, the positively signed and statistically significant coefficient indicates that third-party support for the government increases the risk that a rebel leader will be removed. The hazard increases 2.4 (*hr* of 2.39) times when rebels face externally supported governments, all else being equal, and this effect is statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.015$. As Model 3 and 4, the fully specified

model, too, suggests that external support to government is strongly and positively correlated with the hazard of rebel leader removal as anticipated in the second hypothesis. Figure 2 demonstrates this effect.

Figure 2. The hazard of losing power for rebel leaders across external gov.-biased support



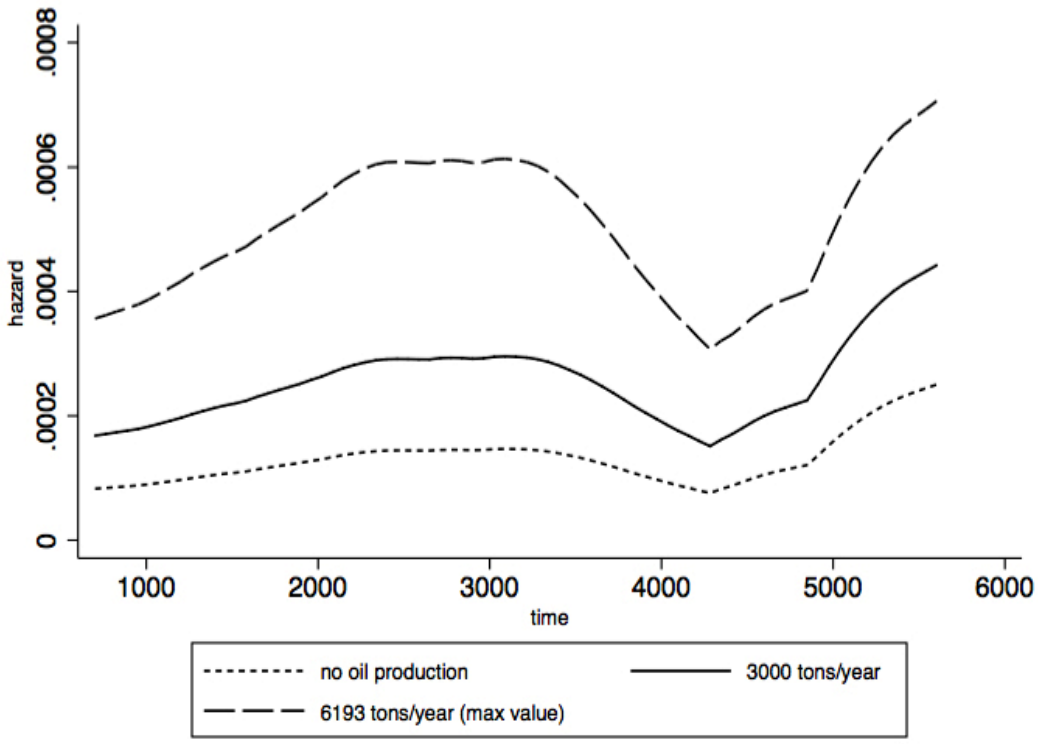
The al-Shabaab insurgency in Somalia stands out as a good example of this direction of the effect of government-biased third-party support. Aden Hashi Farah (Ayro)'s leading ability was highly restricted as the Somalia government received a considerable support from the African Union and the U.S. It was a gradual loss of capabilities. However, it did took only

months for the government to paralyze rebels, followed by a U.S. airstrike killing Farah who was replaced by Sheikh Muktar Robow.

The performance of the remaining covariates reported in Table 1 offers further insight into rebel leader survival. *Oil production per capita* appears as the only variable whose effect is statistically significant. This finding suggests that a 1,000 tons increase in the oil production per capita increases the hazard of rebel leader removal by 28%, all else being equal, and this effect is significant with a *p-value* of 0.030. As Figure 3 presents, oil production has a strong, consistent, and positive effect on the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders. The hazard evidently increases, as the production level exceeds 3,000 tons/year. This effect may stem from an aspect of oil production related to both sides of the conflict. On the one hand, leading a rebel movement against an oil-rich country can be a difficult task for two reasons. First, oil-dependency may require a more concentrated and reckless counterinsurgency strategy on the government's end. Second, unless captured by rebels, oil resources can remain as a trump card of the government that they can efficiently use to obtain external support. On the other hand, given the importance of oil resources for the government, rebel leaders may choose to attack aggressively to seize the resources at the expense of a very high risk of death or defeat.

The effects of external rebel-biased support and the time-interaction term do not substantially change in the fully specified model. Having external support to their groups increases the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders. This positive effect on the hazard, though, diminishes over time. However, both hazard ratios again fail to be statistically significant ($p < 0.73$ and $p < 0.23$, respectively.) In this sense, as well as in the previous models, Model 5 does not provide any empirical support for the Hypothesis 1.

Figure 3. The hazard of losing power for rebel leaders across oil production per capita



External resources may allow some rebel leaders to satisfy their small Ws, which in turn may consolidate their leadership. Civil conflicts, however, are not static processes.[27] Some other factors stemming from the dynamic nature of conflict may condition the effect of rebel-biased external support on rebel leader survival. While the presence of external economic resources makes it possible for leaders to recruit on the basis of short-term rewards, this kind of rebel groups tend to be flooded with opportunistic recruits who show very little commitment to the

[27] Politics, as the historical record and evidence suggest, rarely stands still. Leaders' survival is not an exception, and their risk of losing power varies over time (Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson, 1995; Wright, 2008; Chiozza and Goemans, 2004). Also, they face different kinds of challenges and pressures at different stages of their careers (Licht, 2010).

long-term strategies of the rebellion (Weinstein, 2005). If the form of the external support is not economic, rebel leaders have to face a more difficult recruitment task, where they tend to attract new joiners by relying on social relations to make credible promises about the private rewards that will be the loot of victory. In this sense, external assistance may appear as an attracting feature to recruits, while it probably attracts those who are not well suited to the long-term goal of capturing state power.

The variable of *cumulative intensity* measuring intensity of conflict also fails to reach statistical significance. Conflict's being exceeded 1,000 battle-related deaths ever since the onset increases the hazard for rebel leaders by 39% ($p < 0.46$). Ethno-linguistic fractionalization and number of ethno-political groups within society decreases the hazard of leader change by 45% and 1%, respectively, while fighting the rebellion under an autocratic regime increases the hazard of removal for rebel leaders by 42%. The effects for all these three variables are not statistically significant.

As to the relative performance of the variables in estimating rebel leader tenure, it is safe to assert that, among the key variables of interest, *external support to government* and *relative rebel strength* perform quite well. Rebel leaders, indeed, are less likely to survive when they have to face a government backed by a third-party. In the interstate realm, this finding suggests that states can employ the strategy of intervention as a trump card to be able to strengthen their hands against the home state. Likewise, strength of rebels compared to incumbents matters as well. This finding at least partly explains the typical government behavior that they aim to keep rebels away from natural resources, agriculture-rich areas, and other potential human resources of which rebels may take advantage.

Conclusion

Despite the growing scholarly interest on leaders in conflict studies, rebel groups, as entities, and rebel leaders, as decision-making actors, have been largely overlooked. The dimensions of civil conflict related to rebel groups have been examined in context with many determinants, but not with the individuals who found, organize, and lead rebellions, even though they are highly likely to have individual-level impacts on conflict processes as they are only slightly, if any, constrained by institutional checks and norms. I make an initial effort to underline this gap in this chapter.

To do so, I examine the factors that influence the hazard of rebel leader removal by considering rebel leaders as survival-seeking actors of civil conflict. I turn to a literature conceptualizing state leader survival, and focus on the potential overlapping between autocratic state leaders and rebel leaders in terms of their survival-driven actions and preferences. Drawing on the insights provided by this literature, I formulate a set of hypotheses associating two dimensions civil conflicts to the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders: external support by a third-party, and relative rebel strength.

To test whether these hypotheses are supported empirically, I carry out a survival analysis on a sample of 154 rebel leaders collected for the period 1991-2008. Through a Cox proportional hazards modeling, the empirical findings reveal that government-biased external support and relative rebel strength are correlated with the hazard of losing power for rebel leaders, and these empirical findings are statistically significant. Fighting against an externally supported government appeared as the factor that indicates the highest risk for rebel leaders' tenure. Being at parity with or stronger than government forces, on the other hand, decreases the hazard of rebel leader removal. The other potential scenario for the external support, the existence of a

third-party that supports rebels, does not appear as statistically significant. Aside from its significance, though, the Cox model indicates mixed results for this variable. External support to rebels increases the hazard for rebel leaders. However, this effect turns to the opposite as time goes by, and external rebel-biased support favors rebel leaders in the long-run. The only other factor showing statistical significance is oil production per capita in the state, which is positively correlated with the hazard of removal.

Employing rebel leaders as the unit-of-analysis is by-product of a new and interesting outgrowth of the wider literature on the "rebels." As my findings suggest, a literature on rebel leaders can be interesting enough to warrant our attention in a world where more than two dozen rebel leaders are operating at any time. Future research will certainly require better-specified models and probably more sophisticated methods. It would be also interesting to conduct such analysis with better data covering a lot more rebel leaders from a wider time frame. Individual characteristics of rebel leaders, such as military/educational background, ethnic roots, personality, age, incentives etc., would provide a much more fruitful database for further empirical investigation.

CHAPTER IV.

REBEL LEADER TENURE AND CIVILIAN VICTIMIZATION IN AFRICAN CIVIL WARS, 1991-2008

The Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) killed 1279 civilians in Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire) in four months following the handover of rebel leadership. Until then, however, the ADFL had not targeted civilians. The prominent extant theories of civilian victimization would lead us to believe that the reasons behind this suddenly increased bloodshed are the informational asymmetries, and the struggle for controlling territories and population (Kalyvas, 2004, 2006), or the insurgent capacity (Wood, 2010)[28]. Some would also suggest that rebels' desire to improve their bargaining position with the incumbents (Lake, 2002) or to bolster ethnic cohesion and promote mobilization (Byman, 1998) could explain the increased rebel violence. When the young leader Joseph Kabila came to power upon the assassination of his father, however, the control zone of the group was already carved out, and Kabila did not necessarily need to target more civilians to control any territory or population. Besides, he took over a strong organization with considerable military forces fighting against the Rwanda-Uganda alliance. Furthermore, the bargaining process had already failed before Kabila

[28] Wood suggests that violence is a function of insurgent capacity and selective benefits that insurgents manipulate to gain support. In this context, we would expect leaders of weak rebel groups facing collective action problems to have an incentive to target civilians since they lack the capacity to provide sufficient benefits to entice loyalty.

came to power, and there was no concern about ethnic cohesion or mobilization either (Wilson, 2007). However, the ADFL still killed civilians just after the leadership changed.

The current research on civil war, and civilian victimization in particular tend to assume that government and rebel forces are unitary actors. Considering the complex nature of rebellion and the pivotal role of leaders in rebel actions, however, this approach seems overly reductive. Yet, no extant study takes account of the internal dynamics within rebel organizations in particular that are relevant to the understanding of victimization. Addressing the relationship between rebel leaders' tenure and violence against civilians in African civil wars between 1991 and 2008, this chapter suggests that the individual leadership, as one of the internal dynamics within rebellion, matters crucially in one-sided violence sustained by rebel groups against civilians.

Rebel leader tenure represents the endogenous efficacy of leaders as the key decision-makers, and, therefore, their individual-level influence on targeting civilians. New rebel leaders who have to face both internal and external threats to their nascent leadership, which makes it difficult for them to stamp the authority on their subjects and to earn the government's respect as a formidable rival, should be more likely to target civilians strategically in order to overcome these threats. Experienced leaders, by contrast, are likely to abstain from civilian killings since they successfully exhibited authority over their forces and proved their adequacy as a rebel leader; thus, they can have a wider range of strategic options to employ against government rather than bearing the negative externalities of victimization such as losing the civilian support.

The chapter proceeds in five steps. The next part reviews extant civil war theories focusing on civilian victimization and the individual-level influence of rebel leadership. The subsequent part presents the theory. The potential impact of rebel leadership tenure on killing

civilians is framed in the context of an internal level of competition, and this endogenous mechanism of decision-making in rebel groups is unpacked by addressing its relationship with violence against civilians. The research design follows, and the next section provides the results of the empirical analysis of the hypothesis, and the following section concludes the chapter.

Individual-level influence in civil war and civilian victimization

The current theories of civilian victimization mostly lack individuals as primary explanations. Scholars tend to portray individuals only as the civilian victims of violence in civil war, making them objects rather than subjects of the violence (Kalyvas 2006, 389-90). When they do take individuals into account, on the other hand, the individual-level influence on the conflict, if any, mostly dissolves into the group-level effects. In other words, civil war—and civilian victimization- studies suffer from disregarding the fact that leaders do play an irrefutable role individually in –especially rebels'- decision-making processes which lead to the action of killing civilians (Lichbach 1995, 8).

Grievances, third-party interventions, economic growth, massive population dislocations, refugee flows, and colonial policies are some of the factors influencing intrastate conflicts. Civil war, as a process, however, consists of complex mechanisms that require further scholastic attention on intrastate conflict behavior, which is often determined by individuals' attitudes and actions (Walter 2009, 127). Therefore, civilian victimization by rebels demands a deeper investigation of the micro-level leadership influence. The social and political identities, strategies, and preferences of rebel leaders may get highly influential in the course of civil wars. The profile of a rebel group's membership or a rebel leader's (in)ability of making effective decisions can shape almost all stages of a civil conflict (Weinstein 2007, 10).

Despite the relatively limited attention they have attracted so far, the individual-level effects are not entirely absent from the civil war research. While some studies seeking answers to broad questions investigate why individuals choose to participate in civil wars (Gurr, 1970; Tilly, 1978; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008; Blattman and Miguel, 2010), others go further by analyzing their direct or indirect role in civilian victimization (Walter, 2009; Valentino, 2004; Goemans, Gleditcsch, and Chiozza, 2009; Weinstein, 2007). Furthermore, an increasing number of studies contends and statistically demonstrates that the use of violence against civilians is not always driven by power asymmetries between the sides, but also stems from the incentives that armed groups offer to leaders. Referring to the principal-agent literature developed in industrial organization, this alternative view conceives of one-sided violence as the product of a lack of control by the leader or the predominant recruitment of soldiers whose primary motive is economic gain (Azam, 2002; Weinstein, 2005, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). However, the existing empirical studies perceive civilian-killing strategies as largely inefficient, attributing the action to the lack of control by the leaders (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2006) or the recruitment of opportunistic killers instead of soldiers who are devoted to the long-term aspirations of the rebel organization (Weinstein, 2005, 2007).

Like the individual-level influence, leaders' tenure is also not completely missing from the body of civil war research. The findings of some recent studies specifically control for state leaders' tenure and suggest that governments with longer-tenured leaders are more likely to respond to rebel violence with counter-violence, especially in separatist rebellions (Walter 2009, 91), and that a higher risk of losing office increases the probability of civil war (Chiozza, Gleditcsch, and Goemans 2004, 20). Despite the existence of these works, the literature lacks studies analyzing the direct role of rebel leaders' tenure in violence against civilians.

The commonly held view that individual leaders can and do play a decisive role in the causal process of mass killing is fundamental for this chapter and constitutes the analytical starting point. Bloody episodes of violence against civilians, as some assert, would never have occurred without the instigation of specific leaders (Valentino 2004, 61). In some cases, the victimization of civilians is based on leaders' simple opportunity cost calculations (Schneider 2009, 2), while in other cases it is closely related to their efforts to set in place mechanisms to shape and control the behavior of combatants (Weinstein 2007, 127).

In line with the growing literature attaching importance to the role of leaders in civilian victimization, this chapter draws attention to the fact that individuals cannot be treated as uninfluential or passive actors of armed civil conflicts. Individuals, on the contrary, often play a key role in both the onset and outcome of conflicts by organizing, fighting, manipulating, and most importantly, leading an insurgency. Although conflict decision making and actions taken during wartime are shaped and constrained by institutions and the conflict environment, individuals are the fundemental actors in civil wars. In this sense, I suggest that individuals should be integrated into theories of civil war, and of civilian victimization in particular.

Rebel leader tenure and civilian victimization

Given the importance of evaluating the individual-level influences on targeting civilians, I argue that rebel leadership tenure plays a key role in the level of violence to which rebels resort. I suggest that intentional civilian killings by rebels in civil war are determined in part by rebel leaders' tenure in power, depending both on an in-group demonstration effect and rebel leaders' tendency of considering these actions as a beginning of insurgency.

It is not such a difficulty to overcome for a rebel leader in a civil war to rely on people at his disposal whom he does not have an absolute authority over.[29] The military organization has to be disciplined enough to enforce a common rebel strategy. In this sense, we can assume that the longer rebel leaders' tenure, the stronger the signal of their dominance, control, and authority over their soldiers. Victimizing civilians, at this point, can serve as an introductory challenge in rebel leaders' career, and, as Schneider (2009) argues, most of them actually see targeting civilians as an introduction to battlefield activities.

Rebel leaders' tenure is also closely related to the extent of strategic options that they have at their disposal to intensify their in-group authority, and one such strategic option is the targeting of civilians. Killing civilians, however, would not be a beneficial option for the longer-tenured leader in terms of demonstration and authority implementation. The longer-tenured leader who already has an established authority on his subjects, is more likely to employ strategies focusing on winning the rebellion. For the leader, targeting civilians intentionally at this stage would be not only costly—losing public support, or the risk of prosecution once the rebellion is over, but also strategically unnecessary because of his already-implemented authority. The shorter-tenured leader, however, is more likely to be expected to prove his competence --or power to hurt- through bloodshed, and he can entirely concentrate on winning the rebellion only after overcoming the authority implementation problem.

At this point, I need to clarify how targeting civilians signals a rebel leader's authority or control over the group to his subordinates. How can a massacre of civilians create an authority-based relationship between potentially disloyal rebels and their leaders? In other words, how does killing the out-group people cause authority implementation in the in-group?

[29] Since most rebel leaders are male, male pronouns will be employed when an individual actor is mentioned.

A body of literature points out that killing civilians is a less riskier tactic of insurgency for rebels than choosing to fight in battlefield, as civilians are easier targets. This is a comparison statement for which strong empirical support has been provided (Kalyvas, 2006; Kresp and Wallace, 2011; Hultman et al., 2013). This, however, does not necessarily imply that resorting to violence against civilians is not risky at all. As we observed in the Libya case, during civil conflicts global powers and international organizations tend to consider the security of civilians as their top-priority. In many cases, they do not hesitate to use a threat of force against both sides if civilians are in danger of being targeted intentionally by either side.[30]

The potential risks that killing civilians may bring to rebel leaders are not limited to third-party threats. In most states, the post-conflict consequences for defeated rebels differ on whether they intentionally killed civilians during the conflict, even if they manage to escape from judging by international courts. Those who did not target civilians have a higher chance of getting away with several years in prison, while those who killed civilians are likely to face trials bringing life sentence or death penalty.[31]

Taking this sort of risks into consideration, choosing to kill civilians cannot be treated as a completely unrisky action. As rebel leaders seek to establish a ground for their in-group authority, and for their overall leadership, in their early-tenure, targeting civilians can be risky enough to demonstrate that they are reckless, determined, and dedicated to lead the rebellion.

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[30] As NATO took over control of airstrikes in Libya, and the Obama administration considered new steps to tip the balance of power in the country, the coalition told the rebels that if they endanger civilians, they will not be shielded from possible bombardment by NATO planes and missiles, just as the government's forces had been punished (*New York Times*, March 31, 2011).

[31] In 2006, the founder of Peru's Shining Path; in 2009, three former leaders of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF); and, finally, in 2014, a leftist guerilla commander in Guatemala were sentenced to life in prison by the courts of their countries mainly for targeting civilians during wartime. In 2014, rebel leaders in Bangladesh and Sudan were sentenced to death with similar charges.

Before unpacking these assumptions, to establish the ground for the following, it would also be plausible to mention a different level of competition distinct from the one to which the current civil war research addresses. Most of the civil war studies tend to approach the civilian victimization as a war-like rivalry and competition between governments and rebel groups. They compete for recruitment (Gates, 2002; Weinstein, 2005; Lyall, 2009), public support (Buhaug, 2006; Lounsbery and Cook, 2011), control of resources and strategic territories (Ross, 2004; Kalyvas, 2006), and third-party support (Regan, 1998; Metternich, 2011). Civil wars, however, are also the setting for a completely different level of competition emerging inside of rebel groups, which often have to face a handover of leadership. Although civil conflicts can potentially affect the government leaders' future tenure as well, this kind of competition is almost inevitable in rebel groups since rebel leaders have to deal with the risk of death or capture. In cases of death, resignation, or dismissal of a rebel leader, the leadership competition emerging between rebel elites may lead the group to target civilians during the fledgling period of the new leader where the challenge of maintaining authority and lack of experience hurts his strategic flexibility. In this context, this rigorous competition would compel the new leader to use a strong arm against civilians to demonstrate to the rebel elites that he is qualified and atrocious enough to be the leader. The following will build on the given potential motives behind rebel leaders' decision to victimize civilians.

Most rebel groups are essentially autocratic organizations. Understanding accountability is not quite obvious in the autocratic context, since most autocratic regimes lack formal mechanisms for selecting and removing leaders (Weeks, 2007). However, as Schultz (2001) puts, "while the lack of institutionalized mechanisms for removing undesired leaders [in autocracies] means that removal is relatively rare, it also means that the associated punishment [or the risk]

can be quite severe." For rebel leaders, we would expect an even more severe punishment in case of removal. In this sense, as Lai and Slater (2006) assert, less secure (nonconsolidated) military regimes should be more likely to be bellicose as a way to legitimate their rule and divert attention from potential in-group problems. Rebel leaders, as the organizers of rebellion, have to face the kind of challenges that require authority implementation to overcome. The challenge of control over rebel forces particularly appears when a rebel leader's task turns from attracting recruits to controlling their behavior (Wood, 2010; Weinstein, 2007).

Considering the violence-prone nature of rebel groups, it is safe to say that maintaining solid authority over rebel forces can be a difficult task. Rebel leaders 'face tremendous obstacles in launching and sustaining insurgencies' (Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007). One factor that makes this task even more difficult is that rebels suffer from collective action problems. A rebellion's success depends largely on the leader's ability to overcome these problems and to manage recruits consistent with the objectives of the rebellion (Petersen, 2001; Wood, 2003; Mursheb and Gates, 2005; Collier, 2001). Rebel groups posed with an authority vacuum face collective action complications, such as inequality between group members (Olson, 1965), which gives rebel leaders an incentive to target civilians since they mostly lack the organizational disposition (Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007) and/or resources (Wood, 2010) to provide sufficient benefits to their followers in order to entice their loyalty. Therefore, rebel leaders can choose to offer selective incentives which are powerful enough to overcome the cost of participation.[32] Most rebels seek benefits that are both rival and excludable, such as "loot." By providing the opportunity of killing civilians to their subjects in their early tenure, rebel leaders can alleviate if not eliminate the collective action problems they face.

[32] The extant literature on selective incentives within the collective action approach provides fairly robust evidence that rebels often receive private material incentives for participation above and beyond any anticipated public goods (Lichbach, 1995; Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007).

Moreover, establishing leadership authority requires a considerable amount of time. Thus, new leaders, I argue, are more likely to make aggressive decisions to intensify their authority and dominance on their own subjects, and to demonstrate their strength to governments as well. In other words, a short-tenured leader's decision to target civilians serves as a signal to both rebel forces and the government. Many rebel groups use this threat as a bargaining card against the government to extort concessions or strengthen their hand in the negotiation table (Wood and Kathman, 2014).

In autocratic organizations like rebel groups, the authority largely stems from fear (Lewin, Lippitt, and White, 1939). In this sense, the rebels consider civilian killings as a signal of authority, because commanding to kill civilians in the early tenure demonstrates to the rebel forces that the leader is risk-acceptant within reason and strategic at the same time.

The government perceives civilian deaths as a signal as well, because the leader hereby declares that the government will have to face some audience costs before all else. The government in power consequently has to bear some other serious political costs if it allows a rebel group to target the population it is expected to protect, especially when the government's core constituency is targeted. As Hultman (2009) put it, rebels can employ violence as a conflict strategy to demonstrate 'the power to hurt'. In this sense, violence – as a strategy of killing and destruction, can be considered as an instrument for rebel leaders to demonstrate the power to hurt and solidify their leadership both in-group and against governments. Therefore it carries importance for fledgling leaders to signal both the gravity of the rebellion and their dauntlessness as the commander.

Longer-tenured leaders, by contrast, are more likely to put more emphasis on battle-related tactics, which makes them more selective in resorting to violence against civilians, and

reduces the likelihood of their blind, imprudent, and mass killing actions.[33] Since they are less likely to be constrained by in-group authority concerns, killing civilians becomes an act to reckon with only when it is exceedingly necessary. Moreover, experience comes to a rebel leader in parallel with not only an established authority but also a wider range of strategic options. Rebel leaders, who overcome recruitment and collective action problems as their tenure grows, are able to capture the advantage of focusing on strategic moves to attain the rebellion's primary objectives. Given that the internal organizational problems are resolved due to the intensification of leadership authority over time, rebel leaders are now more able to develop result-driven strategies focusing largely on war outcomes, such as taking possession of resources, enhancing endowments, and winning battle victories (Weinstein, 2007).

Also, Kalyvas (2000) contends that how rebel violence is used is a function of the degree of rebel control since violence should be considered as a strategic enterprise used by both parties to elicit collaboration. Such control becomes necessary for rebel leaders to solicit information about the behavior of civilians. As rebel leaders, and also their groups, exercise some control and gain more local information, they are likely to shift away from such a strategy over time.

Some other scholars of conflict, on the other hand, view violence as a non-strategic by-product of conflict due to looting, either because of indiscipline and lack of commitment by the fighters or as a means of financing the war. In an in-group context, they argue that rebel movements, to which rebels are recruited either by force or through pecuniary rewards, create a less cohesive rebel organization, and that higher magnitude of rebel violence could be interpreted

[33] The nuanced theory of Kalyvas (2006) breaks civil war violence down into two main categories. Selective violence refers to aggression directed towards individuals who are purposely and specifically targeted based on specific information about their actions. Indiscriminate violence, on the other hand, is executed *en masse* without regard for the actions or preferences of individuals. In this chapter, I simply assume that selective violence and fewer civilian deaths—and indiscriminate violence and more civilian deaths, can be considered as essentially equivalent with regard to the relative association in the meanings of the words ("specifically" vs. "*en masse*" = "fewer" vs. "more".)

as a consequence of indiscipline among the rank and file (Weinstein, 2007). Even from this in-group perspective, I argue that fledgling rebel leaders are more likely to face discipline-implementation issues than experienced ones.

Acknowledging the important insights gained from these explanations, I argue that longer-tenured rebel leaders are more likely to abstain from making decisions to victimize civilian populations. Civilians are strategic actors who are capable of offering or withholding their support and cooperation to the rebellion. In this sense, strategic leadership, in the absence of any authority concern, requires attempting to acquire the support of civilian population rather than victimizing them. The leader has a war to win and a rival to fight, thus, strategic choice for rebel leaders becomes much more crucial as their control over their forces solidifies.

As many studies demonstrate, killing civilians indiscriminately should diminish over time as actors consider its counterproductive effects (Kalyvas 2004; Wood 2010). Given that victimizing civilians is not an end in itself as a political goal *per se*, but it can be an effective means of solidifying control and authority, to show strength, and, finally, to win a war, its usage should have diminishing returns. Rebel leaders have to face a risk of counterproductive effects emerging when the tolerable level of violence against civilians is crossed. Therefore, rebel leaders must be careful in keeping their strategy somewhere between killing civilians to intensify their leadership and losing the justifiability of the rebellion. On this account, longer tenure leaders should be more capable of managing this strategic balance of victimization than the less experienced ones. Recent scholastic research on civilian victimization in civil war asserts that although such killings may be indiscriminate in a conflict's early stages, violence becomes more selective and infrequent over time for the following interrelated reasons: belligerents obtain better information on collaborators and defectors over time (Kasfir, 2005); indiscriminate

violence is at least ineffective and often counterproductive as it generates anger against the perpetrator and spurs people to join the rebels (Herreros, 2006; Kalyvas, 2004); and, finally, belligerents eventually learn about these effects and switch to more selective violence (Downes, 2006).

To sum up, I suggest that rebel leaders' ability to affect the level of violence against civilians derives in part from their tenure in power. Rebel leaders are considered as those who stand at the top of the decision-mechanism for killing civilians, and determines and modifies the future strategy of the rebellion. The insight of the theory can be restated as below:

Hypothesis: *The longer the rebel leader's tenure, the lesser the level of rebel violence against civilians in civil war.*

One would argue that my argument touches, at least slightly, on rebel leader survival since a part of it (authority implementation) can vary together with leaders' survival incentives. I, however, do not contend by any means that rebel leaders resort to violence against civilians only when they feel insecure in power. Note that my objective in this Chapter is not to formulate a general theory of civilian victimization. Rebel violence against civilians is a function of many factors. My argument specifically concerns the time period in which rebel leaders, and their leadership, have to face introductory challenges. Even though the underlying assumptions supporting the theoretical framework seem to go hand in hand with the survival-driven incentives, I primarily aim to demonstrate that rebel leadership has its own processes, and that civilians are more likely to be on target in rebel leaders' early tenure. Nevertheless, I address this

potential concern in the empirical design by testing a specification accounting for both tenure and predicted survival of rebel leaders.

Research Design

The hypothesis is tested on a dataset structured with conflict episode-month for all African civil wars from 1991 to 2008 as the unit of analysis.[34] The dataset is largely based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)/The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Armed Conflict Data v.4-2009, minor and major armed conflicts. I collected the data for the key independent variable of *rebel leader tenure* from multiple resources, such as the UCDP database and the UNCTAD reports. The years in which armed conflicts are inactive are included in the data for two years following a drop of battle-related violence below the 25 deaths/year threshold. The monthly observations allow to analyze the effects of short-term changes in rebel leadership. A rebel group has to be active some time during the period of observation to be included in the dataset, in accordance with the UCDP definition of armed conflict: an incompatibility (over either governmental power or territory, or both) between a government and one or more rebel groups that in one year result in at least 25 battle-related deaths. In contrary to the threshold for inclusion in many other civil war studies that require 1,000 battle deaths a year, the one in this dataset allows for a study of civilian victimization also during low intensity conflicts (Hultman 2007, 211). The dataset covers 95 rebel groups and 26 countries in total (see the included Appendix for list of rebel groups).

[34] If dated with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, 46% of the world's civil wars were African at the end of the Cold War. If dated by the fall of the USSR in 1991, 53% of the world's civil wars were African (Bates, Coatsworth, and Williamson, 2009).

The hypothesis accounts for the magnitude of violence against civilians. The dependent variable, *civilians killed by rebels*, is therefore a count of the number of civilians intentionally killed by the rebels each month. The data are collected as events data, covering information on each event where civilians were deliberately targeted, subsequently aggregated to monthly observations. Where an event that produces civilian deaths by rebels, for instance, spans two or more months, all deaths are assigned to the first month. It should be noted that only killings resulted from one-sided rebel violence are coded, which means that civilians killed in the crossfire are excluded from this variable. Moreover, killings of civilians where the perpetrator is unknown or indirect killings, such as starvation of conflict areas, are thereby also excluded (Eck and Hultman, 2007). The key independent variable, *rebel leader tenure*, captures the average number of months that rebel leaders have been in power, coded based on data from the UCDP and the UNCTAD. The tenure of the most rebel leaders starts before the armed conflict begins, so the variable is coded accordingly to be able to capture the pre-war period of leadership. The data contain a considerable number of conflicts with multiple rebel groups fighting the government simultaneously. Since the values for civilians killed by rebels are the sum of violence by all rebel groups in the conflict, the original data do not allow us to know which rebel group killed how many civilians in a conflict month. Therefore, an average tenure variable is generated, measured as the average of all rebel leaders' tenure in that conflict month. In the Model 3 and 4, however, only the conflicts with one rebel group are included as the key independent variable.

A set of control variables is included. The first control is a dummy for *type of incompatibility* over which the rebels challenge the government, coded as territorial conflict = 1, and governmental conflict = 2. Civil conflicts are commonly distinguished between

governmental and territorial conflicts. Governmental conflicts occur over the type of political regime, the replacement of the central authority, or the change of its composition. Territorial conflicts, on the other hand, are about the status of a specified territory, often regarding demands for autonomy or secession (UCDP). Since governmental conflicts are more prone to bloodshed, we would expect more civilian casualties in those conflicts.

I control for *conflict duration* since we would expect more civilian killings in longer conflicts. This is measured as number of months since the conflict started, based on the UCDP date for the first conflict episode. *Conflict active* is a dummy for whether the conflict is active (*e.g.* reaches the 25 battle deaths threshold) for that year or not; active=1, inactive=0, with the expectation that active-in-battlefield conflicts causes fewer civilian deaths since civilian victimization is generally employed as an alternative strategy by both sides.

Another control variable is *number of rebel groups* fighting against government, ranges from 1 to 5 in the dataset. This variable is included only in the Model 2, since only civil conflicts with one rebel group are analyzed in the Model 3 and 4. Only 22.2% of the conflicts in the dataset have multiple rebel groups, and the *N* decreased from 3923 (Model 2) to 3023 (Model 3&4).

To enable an evaluation of the correlation between the intensity level of each party and violence against civilians, I add the one-month-lagged controls, *battle deaths by government*$_{t-1}$ and *battle deaths by rebels*$_{t-1}$, measured as the number of battle-related deaths sustained by the sides in a given month. The variables are lagged one month considering the short units of analysis and the likelihood that belligerents continue an already ongoing behavior (Eck and Hultman, 2007).

Not only civil conflicts but also conflict behavior may have a contagion effect (Hegre et al., 2013). A dummy variable (0/1) accounting for *conflict in neighbor states* is included and coded relying on the UCDP database. And, finally, the last control is *cumulative intensity*, an indicator coming from UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Data, which takes on a value of 1 if the conflict ever exceeded 1,000 battle-related deaths since the onset, and 0 otherwise. The variable of *predicted survival* consists of values that are extracted from the fully specified survival model in Chapter 2. To address the potential issue that rebel leaders' choice of targeting civilians can be driven by their survival-related concerns, I include predicted survival function of leaders for each conflict month. All variables are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary statistics of variables

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Number of civilians killed by rebels	21.4161	311.6599	0	14665
Rebel leader tenure	89.7177	96.2822	1	428
Predicted survival	.8018	.1529	.2470	.9961
Incompatibility	1.6828	.4655	1	2
Conflict_active	.6616	.4732	0	1
Conflict duration	48.9894	46.4470	1	216
Number of rebel groups	1.3112	.6618	1	5
Conflict in neighborhood	.8795	.3256	0	1
Battle deaths by government	10.8887	104.6097	0	3300
Battle deaths by rebels	9.1636	44.4156	0	1032
Cumulative intensity	.6133	.4871	0	1

A count model is employed since the dependent variable is a count of civilians killed by rebels. The data are not normally distributed and largely consist of a large share of zero counts. The variance is greater than 1, and this over-dispersion indicates that the dependent variable has either unobserved heterogeneity or contagion, which requires the zero-inflated negative binomial model (ZINB) to overcome this (King 1989, 129). The ZINB estimates the model in two steps. Firstly, the ZINB produces a logit inflation model estimating the likelihood that an observation belongs to a population with a probability of 1 of having a zero count, thereby separating between cases at risk and those not at risk.

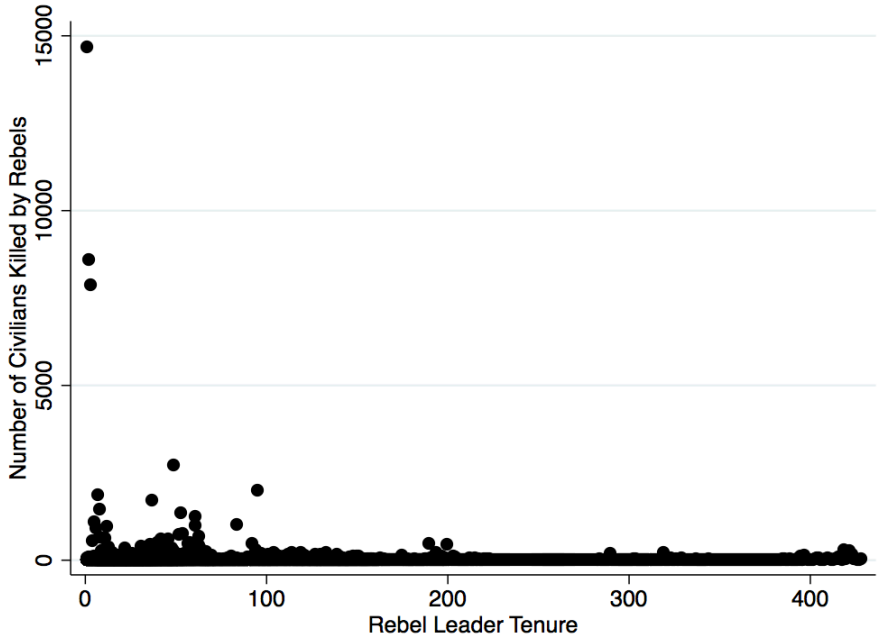
This means that some rebel groups at the observed time simply have a zero probability of killing civilians, while there might be groups at risk of killing civilians that also produce a zero count (Zorn 1998, 375; Hultman 2007, 213). Secondly, the ZINB estimates the negative binomial function by capturing the magnitude of violence against civilians. By estimating the two dimensions simultaneously, it allows to analyze the extent to which an actor employs a strategy of targeting civilians, while at the same time adjusting for the excess zeros. Since these two models are part of the same estimation, they are reported in the same table (Hultman 2007, 215). The empirical emphasis in the analysis, however, is on the second stage. I have also included a Vuong option to the estimation, which provides a test of whether the zero-inflated model or the standard negative binomial model is statistically favored.

Data Analysis

In order to demonstrate descriptive evidence, we can browse the correlation between the magnitude of rebel violence and rebel leader tenure, which is predicted by the hypothesis, through a scatterplot of civilian deaths by rebels and rebel leader tenure. As Figure 1 indicates,

the incidents with more civilian deaths are largely scattered on the early tenure of rebel leaders, which supports the hypothesis. We, however, need to apply to a better-determined empirical specification to test whether this correlation between rebel leader tenure and rebel violence against civilians reveals causation.

Figure 1. Scatterplot of rebel leader tenure and civilians killed by rebels



All statistical results are reported in Table 2. Those presented in the left part of the table are coefficients from the negative binomial regression, adjusted for zero-inflation, on the number of civilians killed by rebels. These are the results that underlie the testing of the hypothesis. The right hand side of the table represents the coefficients from the logit inflation model. These

coefficients, however, are not the basis for analysis here. Before testing the fully specified model with all control variables, the correlation between civilians killed by rebels and the key independent variable, *rebel leader tenure*, is tested to evaluate the hypothesis as such before testing the robustness of the results. Model 1 in Table 2 presents the results indicating that there is a significant and negative correlation between rebel leader tenure and number of civilians killed by rebels just as predicted. This statistically significant, though preliminary, result supports the argument that shorter-tenured rebel leaders are more likely to target civilians.

The fully specified model including all the control variables is presented in Model 2. The ZINB enables substantial estimations of the effects, analyzing the expected percent change in the dependent variables when an independent variable changes one unit—holding all other variables constant (Long and Freese, 2003; Hultman, 2007). The effect of rebel leader tenure on civilian killings remains negative and statistically significant at the level of $p < .1$, which implies that the hypothesis is supported by the statistical results.

Each additional month a rebel leader remains in power decreases the number of civilians killed by rebels by 0.4%, holding all other variables constant. Another way of evaluating the magnitude of the effect of this change is by looking at the percent change when the independent variable increases with one standard deviation. For rebel leader tenure, an increase with one standard deviation means another 93 months in office, and then the expected change is 31% fewer civilians killed by rebels. Therefore, the substantive effect in the Model 1 can be considered fairly robust given that the set of control variables that capture other aspects of the victimization, which could have possibly hurt the correlation between rebel leader tenure and civilian killings, are included in the fully-specified Model 2.

Table 2. Results from the zero-inflated negative binomial regression

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	NBRM	Logit Inflation	NBRM	Logit Inflation	NBRM	Logit Inflation	NBRM	Logit Inflation
Rebel leader tenure	− .0061*** (.0023)	− .0054* (.0032)	− .0039* (.0023)	− .0043** (.0021)	− .0104*** (.0040)	− .0066*** (.0026)	− .0068*** (.0023)	− .0057*** (.0013)
Predicted survival							2. 6383** (1.2474)	.3341 (1.0138)
Incompatibility			.1622 (.4006)	− 1.6891**(.7959)	1.0704 (1.0316)	− 1.2884 (.8615)	1. 0377** (.5068)	− 1. 3279*** (.2686)
Conflict_active			− 1.4827** (.7049)	− 2.2889*** (.4462)	2.4147** (1.0573)	− 1.7289** (.7319)	1. 8760*** (.6084)	− 1. 8407*** (.3151)
Duration			− .0097 (.0063)	.0002 (.0064)	.0149 (.0098)	.0070 (.0065)	. 0105* (.0054)	. 0056* (.0033)
Number of rebel groups			− .6743* (.3433)	− 1.4231* (.7437)				
Conflict in neighborhood			1.2267*** (.3474)	1.0722 (.0013)	1.2947 (1.0883)	− .5822 (1.0317)	1.1114* (.5997)	− .6183* (.3550)
Battle deaths by government$_{t-1}$			.0007** (.0005)	.0010 (.0013)	.0006* (.0003)	.0003 (.0006)	.0007 (.0010)	.0003 (.0009)
Battle deaths by rebels$_{t-1}$			.0004 (.0005)	− .0875*** (.0306)	− .0002 (.0003)	− .0718*** (.0265)	− 1.06e-06 (.0011)	− .0716*** (.0165)
Cumulative intensity			1.8384*** (.5968)	− .9594* (.5551)	1.7368 (1.1825)	− .6608 (.6811)	1.7515*** (.4690)	− .6686*** (.2253)
Constant	4.5312*** (.5063)	1.0528* (.5800)	4.2218*** (1.3943)	8.2501*** (2.1579)	− 2.1620 (2.0373)	6.7672*** (2.4503)	− 3.8244*** (1.2858)	6.7082*** (1.1076)
Ln alpha	2.2391*** (.4673)		1.7555*** (.2174)		1.7644*** (.1859)		1.7274*** (.1105)	
Alpha	9.3848 (4.3852)		5.7864 (1.2581)		5.8383 (1.0851)		5.6260 (.6219)	
N	3972		3923		3053		3053	
Nonzero	690		685		341		341	
Zero	3282		3238		2712		2712	
Log pseudo-likelihood	− 5277.75		− 4681.60		− 2419.65		− 2417.09	

Estimations performed using Stata 13.1. Standard errors adjusted for clustering on conflict episode. *p < .1, **p < .05, ***p < .01, two-tailed test. The Vuong test of zero-inflated negative binomial vs. standard negative binomial supported the choice of estimator. The Vuong statistic indicated that the zero-inflated regression is statistically favored (z = 5.46 for Model 1, z = 16.32 for model 2, z = 12.00 for Model 3, z = 15.26 for Model 4).

Among the control variables, *conflict active, battle deaths by government*$_{t-1}$, *number of rebel groups*, *conflict in neighborhood*, and *cumulative intensity* are statistically significant. According to results, the number of civilians killed by rebels is associated with fewer rebel groups fighting against government simultaneously, existence of a conflict in neighbor states, higher number of battle deaths by government, and, finally, conflicts which ever exceeded 1,000 battle-related deaths since the onset.

As mentioned above, due to the data restrictions, the key independent variable is measured as the average tenure of rebel leaders where there are multiple rebel groups fighting against government simultaneously. One would argue that this way of measurement could diminish the variable's capacity of capturing the potential effect since averaging the tenure sweeps away the differences between rebel leaders' tenure and the potential individual effects that stem from it. Therefore, in Model 3, the sample is reduced to the conflicts with only one rebel group fighting against government. The variables in the Model 2 are also included in the Model 3, except *number of rebel groups*. The effect of rebel leader tenure still remains negative and statistically significant at the level of $p < .01$, which indicates that the results produced by first two models are robust and support the hypothesis. Each additional month a rebel leader remains in power decreases the number of civilians killed by rebels by 1%, holding all other variables constant. As an alternative interpretation of the magnitude of the effect, an increase of one standard deviation in rebel leader tenure (101 months in office) makes us expect 65% fewer civilians killed by rebels.

Differently form the Model 2, having a conflict in neighborhood and fighting a civil conflict which ever exceeded 1,000 battle-related deaths since the onset show no significant effect on the civilian killings by rebels in the Model 3. Number of battle deaths by government,

on the other hand, remains statistically significant and positively associated with the outcome variable.

Model 4 includes *predicted survival* of rebel leaders. As the findings indicate, tenure is still negatively correlated with civilian killings, and this result is statistically significant at the level of $p < .01$. Predicted survival likelihood of rebel leaders also shows statistical significance at the level of $p < .05$. Given that the variable is positively correlated with the number of civilian killings, we can contend that rebel leaders tend to target more civilians when they are least likely to lose power, which occurs early in their tenure. This finding addresses the potential alternative argument that rebel leaders choose to kill civilians to survive in power by showing that this is not the case. Rebel leaders' tendency of victimizing civilians in their early tenure persists even when controlled for their likelihood of survival.

As an evaluation of the statistical findings, overall, the suggested link between rebel leader tenure and rebel violence finds some empirical support. Even when controlling for some potential conflict-level and group-level indicators, rebel leaders are more likely to resort to violence against civilians in their early tenure. This finding is robust when the universe of rebel groups is cut down to include only those that fight against incumbents as the only rebel organization. This find is also in line with Kalyvas (2004) and Wood (2010) who suggest that indiscriminate violence should diminish over time as political actors recognize its counterproductive effects.

Turning to the control variables that capture the conflict dynamics, we observe some interesting patterns. According to findings, the number of rebel groups fighting in the war is significantly and negatively associated with rebel violence. This is interesting considering the recent finding of Wood and Kathman (2015) that rebel groups are more likely to target civilians

upon the entrance of new rivals due to the perceived threat to control over resources and because the arrival of new groups diminishes the gains existing groups expect from either victory or successful conflict bargaining.

Battle-related government killings have a positive, significant, but a relatively small effect on rebel killings of civilians in several models. This indicates that rebels choose to use more violence against civilians when the incumbents they are fighting are targeting the rebel population. One reason might be that the rebels try to revenge by targeting civilians to impose some serious audience costs on the government. This finding is also in line with Hultman (2007).

Finally, according to findings, the intensity of the conflict is significantly and positively associated with rebel violence. Given that the intensity is related to the number of battle-related deaths, this finding suggests that the escalation in the level of violence between rebels and government is likely to spill over the civilian population.

Conclusion

The findings on the African civil wars suggest that examining the effects of micro-level leadership factors on civilian victimization is potentially fruitful for understanding why and when rebels tend to target civilians. Rebel leader tenure may play a role in the magnitude of violence against civilians in civil war. I argued, and tried to provide empirical evidence for, that shorter rebel leaders' tenure, the more civilians we can expect their groups to kill intentionally.

The main argument, in combination with the empirical findings in this chapter, reveals a new aspect regarding violence in civil war. In addition to the given importance of leadership, the empirical results also confirm the potential importance of analyzing civilian victimization at the individual-level. Therefore, individuals should not be considered as uninfluential or passive

actors of armed civil conflicts. They, on the contrary, should be taken into consideration as substantial actors that can play a key role in many aspects of conflicts, including targeting civilians, by organizing, fighting, manipulating, and most importantly, leading a rebellion. Despite the undeniable fact that decision making and actions taken during wartime are mainly shaped and determined by institutions and the conflict environment, individuals can still be the fundemental actors in civil wars.

It should also be noted that the results presented here are not exempt from some limitations. The empirical models need a couple more specifications included to be able to reduce any concern that the results are driven by the group dynamics. Although the empirical strategy of this chapter includes a serious consideration of some conflict-related factors, I must admit that there is still room for concerns that the higher number of civilian killings in leaders' early tenure can be driven by some group dynamics. Including various lags to the models on civilians killed and turnover rate would be helpful to strengthen these results and to demonstrate that this is leaders' choice rather than group or stiuational dynamics.

Also, a concern may be raised about the possibility of selection. Do rebel leaders tend to target civilians in their early tenure, or do they die young because they are violent? However, it would be safe to assume that rebel leaders would put themselves in much more deadly situations if they were choosing to fight on the battlefield. This sometimes happens as new leaders seek to make a name for themselves to gain respect by showing that they can win battles. However, although this chapter focuses on the choice to kill civilians, admittedly, there is still room for several alternative causal paths that can explain the phenomenon.

CHAPTER V.

REBELS IN OFFICE: POST-CONFLICT LEADERSHIP TRANSITION AND INTERSTATE CONFLICT INITIATION

Rebel leaders fight for political power and rebel victories. In some cases, negotiated settlements of civil wars bring political opportunities for the leaders. In most post-war contexts, as long as rebels are able to receive at the least some concessions, former rebel leaders continue to pursue political careers. The advancement of rebel leaders in the political field is, thus, being the political leader in the post-war society. Although rebel careers have a strong variance –some become senior politicians, while others have to be content with lower level positions– most winner rebel leaders aim to be the leader of the state.

The integration of rebels is one of the substantial post-war challenges. Former rebels can serve in the political establishment of a post-war society as president, parliamentarian, minister or high government official without necessarily belonging to a political party that has risen from a rebel group. Civil wars shape not only post-war societies but also the political elites who operate in those societies. Post-conflict shifts in the political leadership are clearly connected to the upheavals generated by the conflict. Therefore, any theory about the post-war careers of rebel leaders should take into account the historical context–which is the civil war– in which the rebels come into play as counter-elites in control of armed organizations and often territories.

Civil wars initiate dynamics of social mobility, and, depending on their territorial and temporal extension, they tend to cause some substantial changes in a society and its elite structure, which is highly likely to affect post-war conditions as well. Rebel leaders are not exempt from this social dynamic. Where they manage to force the government to negotiated settlements or they are able to get even a military victory, the post-war order give them opportunities for longer political careers (Maleseivic, 2010).

Laurent Desire Kabila was the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from 1997 to 2001. He had led a group of four Congolese rebel groups, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL), for years before he came to power by proclaiming himself as the president of the DRC. Kabila was just one of many state leaders who were once rebel leaders, and, as the historical record indicates, these leaders tend to struggle to keep their states out of militarized conflicts when they take off their guerrilla uniforms and sit on the chair of presidency.

This chapter focuses on rebel leaders' post-conflict behavior when they become state leaders by specifically emphasizing the potential role of prior rebel experience at the leadership level in interstate conflict initiation. The idea that former rebel experience may affect future leadership behavior relies on two different bodies of literature: Political-psychology-oriented research on the role of former experiences in political behavior including decision-making, and the emerging scholarly work on the causal mechanism between leaders' backgrounds and conflict behavior. In this sense, the argument presented in this chapter also attempts to integrate the insights that have been provided by these two avenues of research by underlying the causal paths previously addressed by both.

Despite enormous growth in research on leaders over the last several years (Weeks, 2011; Debs, and Goemans, 2010; Croco, 2011; Flores et al., 2013), nearly all current research on leaders and interstate conflict focuses on how domestic institutional settings constrain and form behavior of leaders rather than demonstrating how variation in leaders' individual attributes affects state behavior. The international relations literature on leaders focuses on how variations in domestic institutional contexts shape factors such as leadership tenure (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Chiozza and Goemans 2003, 2004), the institutionally-induced relationship between leadership tenure and conflict (Goemans, 2008; Debs and Goemans 2010), the responsibility and punishment of leaders (Goemans 2000; Croco, 2011; Wolford, 2012), and the decisions of leaders in the military arena (Weeks, 2011).

The conventional wisdom that former experiences determine, or at least heavily affect, an individual's future behavior constitutes a central assumption in many fields of social science including psychology and sociology. Even though many political scientists may heuristically embrace this insight, the current interstate conflict research fails to incorporate adequately how this causal mechanism may systematically work in explaining leaders' conflict behavior.

As Horowitz and Stam (2012) posit, early political psychology studies on elite behavior suggest that former life experiences –educational backgrounds, crises, major events– equip elites for their future leadership roles and help us to understand their leadership behavior once they are in office (Lasswell and Lerner, 1965; Putnam, 1976). Hermann (1980) contends that scholars of international politics tend to understate the individual-level dynamics of leadership and their role in foreign policy making.

Despite then growing research on psychological foundations of leaders' beliefs and preferences (Hermann, 1980, 2003; Greenstein, 1992; Barber, 1992; Post, 2003), this fruitful

bridge between politics and psychology has produced little systematic scholarly work evaluating the effects of former experiences in the way leaders behave in office except the more current studies of Horowitz and Stam (2012) and Fuhrmann and Horowitz (2013) striking this gap by employing leaders as the level of analysis.

In her analysis of leadership style, Hermann (1980) accommodates four kinds of personal characteristics: *beliefs and motives*, which determine a leader's view of the world; and *decision style* and *interpersonal style*, which shape a leader's personal political behavior. Hermann's "decision style" overlaps with the instrumental beliefs definition of George's (1969) and some aspects of Barber's (1992) formulation of presidential character (Strack, 2005). Although all these studies mention that former life experiences play a role in shaping the personal characteristics –both leaders' world view and political behavior, however, the political psychology and international relations literatures have little systematic work sharply examining how formative experiences, such as military-related experiences, affect the leader behavior.

On the other hand, we have at least a well-established psychology literature suggesting that interplay of genes and environment explain much of individuals' behavior and attitudes (Horowitz and Stam, 2012). Individuals' environment includes much of life experiences such as schooling, parenting, training etc. Psychologists, therefore, suggest that all these factors determine individuals' preferences, risk attitudes, and personal dispositions (Roberts et al., 2003; Caspi and Roberts, 2005).

Exposure to combat specifically represents a foundational and arguably traumatic experience that may affect future violence-related beliefs and behavior (Voors et al., 2010). Some micro-level data suggests that exposure to combat makes people more risk acceptant. Survey research by Brunk et al. (1990) focusing on retired military officers in the United States

found that those who had participated in combat were significantly less sensitive to risk. In Burundi, Voors et al., (2010) used variation in exposure to combat at the village level as a way to measure risk attitudes among villagers. They showed that people in villages exposed to combat have higher levels of risk seeking and discount the future more.

In most cases, participation in rebellious activity is an extremely risk-acceptant choice. Rebel groups are constantly threatened by incumbents and are much more likely to be eliminated than to win the war. Rebel leaders' risk propensity therefore will potentially translate into more revisionist behavior if the rebellion succeeds and they achieve their goal of taking control of the state. After all, revisionist behavior on an international scale is likely to involve the threat or use of military force.

This argument is consistent with Colgan's (2010), who finds that revolutionary regimes are more likely to engage in militarized behavior. Those with prior rebel experience might also be more risk acceptant in general, however, even if they do not immediately rise to power following a successful rebellion. He also suggests that the effects of revolutionary regimes might lie in part with the background characteristics of the leaders who control them.

All political leaders are risk-tolerant and ambitious to some extent. However, as Colgan (2013b) asserts, the level of risk-tolerance of a leader is higher when he/she faces overwhelming challenges rather than a regularized process to reach the office, such as using violence against multiple rivals including government in many cases. In Colgan's (2013a, p. 23) words, "George Bush took some risks to obtain office; Fidel Castro took considerably more."

Rebel leadership comes forth as one of the most relevant experiences for a state leader within this context. Despite the fact that all rebel leaders are not necessarily "revolutionary", in most cases they still have to be ruthless and risk-tolerant enough to attempt to overturn the

established political apparatus and power of government. In other words, rebel leadership is a particularly risky endeavor because challenging the state with military force is an action much more likely to end in failure than success, and those on the losing side often suffer severe personal consequences (Horowitz and Stam, 2012).

Individuals who self-select into rebel leadership should thus be especially risk acceptant, a trait likely to carry over if and when they win office later in their lives. Therefore, one may argue that former rebel leaders, like revolutionary leaders, are considerably more risk-tolerant than their counterparts who win the office through a regularized process simply because rebellions select risk-tolerant and ambitious leaders.

Even only participation in a rebel group might be considered as a type of experience that predicts more risk-acceptant behavior once a leader wins office. Given that simply participating in rebel forces signals that an individual is likely to be more risk-acceptant than usual (Stanton, 2009), success as a rebel likely reinforces this innate proclivity (Corr, 2004). The causal link between rebel experience and future military behavior follows logically from thinking about the people who are most likely to join rebellion. Their grievances with the existing nation-state apparatus (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000; Collier, 2001; Berdal and Malone, 2000; Sambanis, 2002) are so large that they choose the optimal strategy of getting armed and seeking to secede or even conquer the state.

Some studies introduce argumental support for this causal mechanism. Huntington (1957) reveals that "...the armed man is held to believe that peace is stultifying and that conflict and war develop man's highest moral and intellectual qualities; he favors aggressive and bellicose national policies". Skocpol (1979, 1988) asserts that revolutionary leaders are driven in their foreign policy decisions by desire to compensate past military failures. Sechser (2004) posits that

ties to the military groups also create parochial interests in favor of using armed force and decision-making biases towards rapid escalation. George (1980) contends that the prior experiences of leaders inform their sense of personal efficacy. Matthews (1954) suggests that prior experiences affect the way leaders view the potential costs and benefit of decisions, and the types of strategies they consider as likely to succeed.

Another body of literature that explicitly applies to this context deals with elite opinions and foreign policy of the United States, and examines preferences regarding the use of force (Wittkopf, 1990; Peffley et al., 1995; Holsti, 1996). At this point, the substantial division among elites who may have a word on the use of force is the distinction between civilian and military leadership. There have been two schools of thought regarding civilian and military opinions and the use of force (Feaver and Gelpi, 2004). As a matter of fact, these two schools directly relate to the two competing hypotheses in this chapter.

The traditional view contends that militaries are inclined to militarism, which can make them to embrace the martial way of life and to develop an excessive faith in military resolutions to political problems. This tendency makes them war-prone and therefore a threat to the polity they are supposed to provide security (Ekirch, 1956). More specifically, military experience may lead leaders to employ rather expansive foreign policy goals (Feaver and Gelpi, 2004). [35]

There is also some evidence for countries other than the United States that militaries are more war-prone. Brecher (1996) points out that militaries in power are likely to resort to violence or more severe violence, even if alternative solutions of crisis are available. Lasswell (1997) describes militaries as "specialists on violence". Relying on his cross-national empirical analysis

[35] American history is full with concerns over the expansion of militarism among military elites. The belief that strong military influence over the government would make it more war-prone drove the Constitution framers' decision to make civilian control of the military so essential a feature of the Constitution (Kohn, 1975; Feaver and Gelpi, 2004).

of comparative foreign policy between 1959-68, Geller (1985) finds that nations in which militaries have substantial influence on the policy-making mechanism employ foreign behaviors that are more bellicose and less cooperative than nations in which militaries lack this influence. Barnett (1970) argues that the power of the German Army was a crucial factor causing World War I. Also, in Japan, the weak civilian elites against the strong military frequently facilitated international conflicts (Rousseau, 1996). It is likely that, whenever military influence increases within two states in a conflict, the probability for a tendency toward escalation increases. To put it differently, all other factors being equal, as military influence increases, military measures are expected to come into play (Choi and James, 2005).

The historical record, especially in Africa, shows that many rebel leaders became presidents after they had fought a civil war. We observe this pattern, for instance, in CAR, Burundi, Rwanda, and DRC. Note that mentioning former rebel leaders who won office afterwards actually refers to a success since a failure in civil war as a rebel leader is highly likely to close the road to office. In this sense, self-selection into state leadership may differ from self-selection into rebel leadership. The organizational form of rebel groups varies tremendously and ranges from loosely organized groups to quasi-states (Bakonyi et al. 2006). However, leaders are often well educated and have been politically active before the war, not least as members of the political establishment. Socio-economic disparities between leaders and the recruits are usually quite large (Malthaner, 2007). Rebel leaders have economic, social, cultural, or symbolic (collective recognition of the first three) capital, which help them to gain and obtain their status throughout the war (Bourdieu, 1998). When it comes to self-selection into governmental leadership, though, they heavily rely on their long established leadership and success that they have opportunity to translate from rebel organization to state structure.

Although some of them experience exile or imprisonment, even staying alive and getting in charge of the country can easily be considered as a success. Thus, we should expect that those who experienced success during their rebel careers should be more prone to think of the use of military force in a positive light when they become state leaders, making them more conflict prone (Colgan, 2013a; Horowitz and Stam, 2012; Fuhrmann and Horowitz, 2013). Additionally, risk-tolerance is highly relevant for interstate conflicts since MIDs are much less predictable than accepting the status quo (Fearon, 1995; Powell, 1999; Bueno de Mesquita, 2004; Filson and Warner, 2004), and ambitious leaders who did not accept the status quo domestically are more likely to reject the status quo internationally once they are in office.

Skocpol (1988) contends that successful revolutionary leaders are particularly good at organizing and mobilizing their subjects for campaigns of mass violence. This appears as a skill that is beneficial for them to be successful in the domestic revolutionary struggle. Harff and Gurr (1988) support this view, but they argue that revolutionary leaders who have secured power and maintained their leadership by resorting to violence domestically are disposed to respond violently to future challenges, even if those challenges arise internationally.

The other causal path between former rebel leaders and conflict initiation relies on the internal factors. While putting emphasis on leaders' preferences, I should not overlook the structural –and hence institutional differences between rebel groups and states. State leaders operate within the constraints of a political system, rarely having the capacity to rule by fiat. Even authoritarian leaders have to deal with institutional checks and balances, despite typically weaker ones than those in democratic systems, that make it difficult to enact policies exactly when and how they wish (Cheibub et al., 2010).

Rebel leaders, however, are less likely to face these constraints of domestic political structures, at least in short-term, once they are in office since they mostly carry on their authority and charisma stemmed from their rebel leadership. This "rebellion winner" effect lasts at least until the post-war order is consolidated and the domestic political structure gets normalized (Hensell and Gerdes, 2013).

As part of the post-civil war period, especially in revolutionary civil wars, the domestic structure is either overturned or significantly changed or replaced by a new structure (Huntington, 1968; Skocpol 1979; Walt, 1996). This amplifies the salience of the leaders' preferences and risk-tolerance, which are largely determined by their prior experiences (Colgan, 2013). Furthermore, the lack of well-established domestic constraints also increases the likelihood of strategic miscalculations since nobody outside of the leaders' inner circle is allowed to provide objective input on decisions (Walt, 1996). Taking all these into consideration, then, we can expect the following hypothesis:

H1a: *Leaders with prior rebel leadership experience should be more likely to initiate interstate conflicts.*

Some scholars, on the other hand, provide contradictory arguments based on the alternative perspective that prior military-related experience actually leads to less conflict-prone leaders in office. As mentioned above, there have been two schools of thought regarding civilian and military preferences and the use of force. The first approach, called the traditional view, treats leaders with military background as conflictual individuals who are likely to employ violence to solve political problems. In spite of this widely accepted perspective, a second school

of thought argues that militarism is not quite a central concern, at least not within the American military elite. The consensus in the body of literature on Cold War and post-Cold War civil-military relations in the United States is that civilian leaders tend to have more far-reaching foreign policy goals and greater faith in military solutions to political problems (Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1960; Petraeus, 1989; Betts, 1991).

The assertions of this school of thought have been pervasive since Huntington's classic treatise The Soldier and the State (1957). Huntington argues that leaders with military experience are risk-averse in the actual use of force, even though they tend to view the world through a threatening lens, because they evaluate other states based on their capabilities rather than their intentions. He claims that the conservative military advocates preparedness but rarely favors war since militaries only favors war when a military victory is a near certainty.[36]

Janowitz (1960) argues that military leaders are often more realistic and conservative about the use of force than their non-military counterparts, although this fact is mostly disregarded by the flawed perception of militaries as conflict seekers (Horowitz and Stam, 2012).

Betts (1991) affirms Huntington's claims concluding from several detailed case analyses that U.S. militaries were typically more diffident than their civilian counterparts about suggesting military action.[37] There is also evidence on countries other than the U.S. supporting this view. Scholars following in Betts's footsteps have drawn similar conclusions from studies of Great Britain, India, African military dictatorships, and the United States since the Vietnam War (Lee 1991; Andreski 1980; Bienen 1980; Sagan, 1986; Maoz and Abdolali, 1989).

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36 Feaver and Gelpi contend that Huntington is not consistent on this point, and that he draws the opposite picture when he contrasts two perspectives of peace and war. For the detailed demonstration of Huntington's inconsistency, see. Feaver and Gelpi, 2004, p. 24-25.

37 Betts (1991) argues, however, that militaries tend to favor tactical escalation, which is, once war has begun, militaries tend to recommend large-scale, decisive operations.

This view also bases its logic on the assumption that since militaries pay for wars with their own blood, they tend to be reluctant to order troops into combat. Civilian politicians, in contrast, without any experience of the horror of combat, are more likely to engage in military actions. This logic appeared repeatedly on the eve of the 2003 American offensive in Iraq, with opponents of the invasion asserting that the excessive enthusiasm of some civilian elites for a military campaign exposed a lack of firsthand experience in combat. Senator Chuck Hagel emblematically remarked on this viewpoint:

> Many of those who want to rush this country into war and think it would be so quick and easy don't know anything about war. They come at it from an intellectual perspective, versus having sat in jungles or foxholes and watched their friends get their heads blown off (Quoted in Sechser, 2004).

Also, some analyses of U.S. decision-making during the cold war crises highlight a general civil-military pattern of disagreement (Gelpi and Feaver, 2002). It has been argued that civilian leaders tend to be more willing to use the military force to deal with a diplomatic problem, while military leaders tend toward greater reluctance in employing a military solution to such problems (Gacek, 1994; Feaver, 1995). Leaders and political elites with military experience represent a "realpolitik" view that reserves the use of force for interstate crises that include a substantial threat to national security or allies, control of territory, and the maintenance of geostrategic access and position. Leaders with no military experience, on the other hand, tend to hold a view called "interventionist" which extends the use military force to address some other issues that do not exactly fit within the interstate security paradigm. Such diplomatic problems include human rights abuses, the internal collapse of governance, and the attempt to alter a state's domestic regime (Feaver and Gelpi, 1999). Thus, civilian leaders will generally have a

wider set of problems across which they choose to resort to the use of force, while leaders with military experience will employ force only over a narrower range of issues.[38] These lead to the following hypothesis:

H1b: *Leaders with prior rebel leadership experience should be less likely to initiate interstate conflicts.*

Empirical Strategy and Data Analysis

The main portion of the data comes from multiple datasets: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset v.4-2012; Correlates of War (COW) Data v4.0; Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza (2009) to obtain the universe of heads of state; finally, the data on prior rebel leadership experience are gathered from several sources such as databases of prominent leaders, leader-specific encyclopedias, individual biographies, and the UNCTAD reports. The final data consist of 9,451 leader years covering 1084 separate leaders from 1946 to 2001. The unit of analysis is the leader-year. In other words, there is one observation per leader, per year.

Prior rebel experience might affect the way leaders make decisions once they get into office in several ways. For the purposes of this chapter, though, I focus on the initiation of interstate armed conflicts. Thus, the dependent variable of interest is the initiation of interstate armed conflicts. Initiation is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if a state initiated a conflict in a given leader-year and 0 otherwise.

38 In the post-cold war era, the civilian-military distinction has grown more noticeable, and has fed the concern about the reluctant ex-warriors who are strictly resisting civilian-led demands to use force abroad (Kohn, 1994; Feaver, 1998; Desch, 1999; Rizer, 2000).

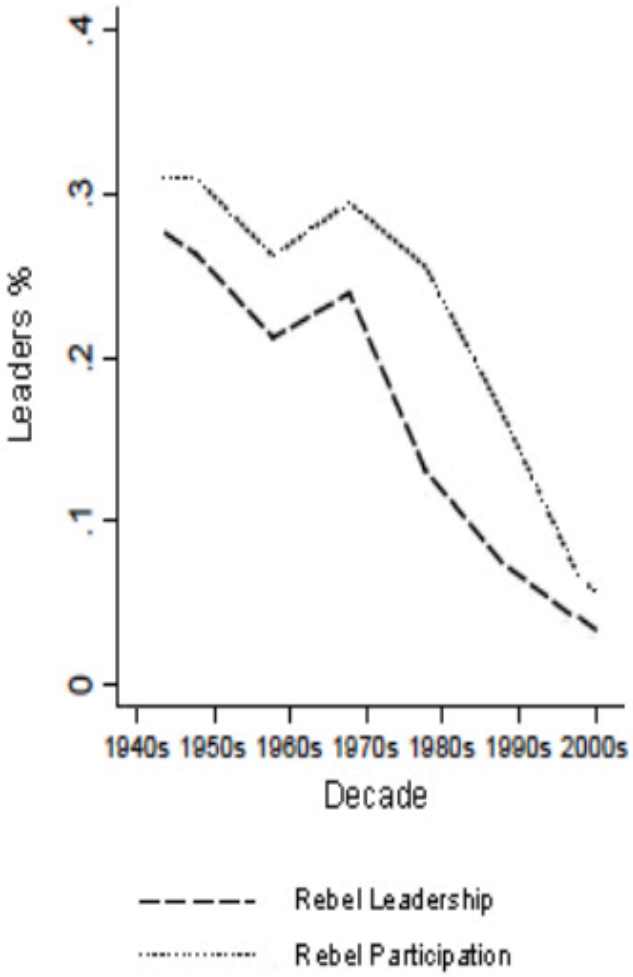
The first key independent variable is also a dummy (0/1) for prior *rebel leadership* experience. The theory I rely on mostly refers to rebel leadership. Prior participation to rebellious movements, however, may also have similar effects on state leaders' foreign policy behavior. The argument of risk-acceptance and the civilian-military distinction can both tell us about the potential influence of not only rebel leadership but also prior participation to insurgencies. Indeed, the historical record indicates that some state leaders were once rebel elites, not necessarily rebel leaders (*e.g.* Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, Salvador Sanchez Caren in El Salvador, Taur Matan Ruak in East Timor). I add a dichotomous variable for *prior participation* to rebellious movements to capture this potential mechanism.

Broken down by decade and rebel experience, Figure 1 demonstrates the variation over time in the rebellious backgrounds of heads of state from 1900-2004.[39] The results indicate that most leaders do not have rebel experience. There is variation over time, though the percentage of leaders with prior rebel experience, with the exception of the incomplete last decade, tends to vary between 20 and 30 percent. The increase in the percentage of leaders with rebel experience in the 1940s and 1950s is mainly due to the European leaders who served in resistance movements in World War II, and leaders of newly decolonized countries, especially in Africa.

Some studies contend that leaders with military background may be driven in their foreign policy goals by a desire to atone for past military failures (Skocpol 1979, 1988). A variable is also added to see how rebel leaders did in those conflicts to be able to consider that experience of winning or losing may drive the results. *Prior rebel win/loss* is coded 1 if the relevant condition is met and 0 otherwise.

[39] Data come from Lentz (1994, 1999), encyclopedia of heads of states and governments, individual leader biographies, and other sources.

Figure 1. Prior Rebel Leadership and Rebellion Participation of State Heads



The hypotheses are tested through logit models. While the results are consistent without control variables, to maintain the robustness some potentially confounding variables are added. Therefore, consistent with the existing international relations theories, I include a set of control variables. The material power of the state is included by incorporating the COW material *capabilities* score for each state with the expectation that states with greater capabilities are more

likely to initiate an armed conflict (Singer, 1987). The overall dyadic *satisfaction* of a state with the system leader may also influence that state's likelihood of conflict initiation (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003).

Leaders act within an institutional environment, and they are restricted in their decisions and policies by the institutional checks and norms. Military experience may endow leaders in democratic states with more credibility in institutional competition against other bureaucratic actors (Horowitz and Stam, 2012). Autocratic leaders in general may have more freedom of action. Therefore, I control for the effect that different institutions may have on the probability that leaders engage in militarized behavior with an *autocracy* variable that is 0 if a state scored at or below -7 on the Polity scale, and 1 otherwise. Like military experience, *age* of leaders may give them more credibility in institutional structures (Horowitz et al., 2005). While some scholars find that aging leaders are more likely to be involved in armed conflicts than young leaders (Horowitz et al. 2005, Bak and Palmer, 2010), others assert that the leader's age decreases the likelihood of conflict in dictatorships, but not in democratic regimes (Berton and Panel, 2014).

One would argue that the same national-level factors that lead individuals to have rebel experiences also make countries more likely to engage in militarized behavior, meaning any results are endogenous. While possible, the time gaps between when individuals begin rebellious action and when they become heads of states are generally long and the international security environment often changes rapidly. To account for the possibility of selection that countries choose dispute-prone former rebel personnel as leaders when they expect to face a conflict in the near future, I include two control variables (Jones and Olken, 2005; Horowitz and Stam, 2012). The models 2 and 3 include two variables designed to control for the way leader selection based

on prior rebel experience could affect the probability of a militarized dispute. *Time in Office* measures the number of days a leader has spent in office from the beginning of their term to the beginning of the year in question. If this variable is negative and significant, it suggests that countries are switching leaders shortly before MIDs occur, revealing a potentially confounding selection process. *Five Year Challenge Lag* measures whether or not a country has been challenged in a MID in the last five years, a good indication of the interest a country might have in selecting a leader based on the ex-ante risk of a dispute. This controls for the possibility that a country in a more dangerous neighborhood may be more likely to select a leader with ex-ante characteristics that would bias the results. Finally, the results below are also consistent when I include some additional variables such as major power status, number of borders, trade openness, and a control for the Cold War, among others (Horowitz and Stam, 2012).

All models presented below use Huber-White robust standard errors. I also control for leaders who spend a long time in office (*e.g.* Kim Il Sung of North Korea, Fidel Castro of Cuba) by clustering standard errors on the leader. This helps ensure that no individual leader skews the results. To control for time dependence in the data, I include variables measuring the time since the country was last in a MID, as well as the square and cube of that number (Carter and Signorino, 2010).

Table 1 below shows the results. The first model includes only the key independent variables, and the results indicate that both prior *rebel leadership* and *prior participation* to rebellious actions have a statistically significant and positive effect on the likelihood of MID initiation. This provides strong initial evidence in support of the underlying argument that variations in the backgrounds of leaders have significant effects. I now turn to analyze the fully-specified model to see the substantive effects associated with the indicators of prior rebel

leadership and participation to rebellious movements and whether these indicators can be sustained in combination with, and when controlling for, other modifying factors.

The full model (model 2) demonstrates the importance of rebel experience. A likelihood ratio test between a version of model 2 that does not include any leader variables and model 2 with the leader variables indicates that the improved specification from adding the leader background variables is also statistically significant and improved the fit of the model. This points out the value-added from endogenizing the rebel experiences of leaders into models of international conflict.

The results indicate that, as *Hypothesis 1a* predicts, having a prior rebel leadership experience has a positive and statistically significant effect on the likelihood for a state leader to initiate an MID. All else being equal, state leaders who once led a rebellion are 37% more likely to initiate an MID than those who did not experience rebel leadership ($p<0.01$). This finding suggests that those leaders who come to power with prior rebel leadership experience –an inherently dangerous behavioral background– are likely to be more bellicose than their civilian counterparts when they enter office. This is likely partly due to the greater inherent propensity for risk on the part of former rebels, but also due to higher levels of martial efficacy due to their past success as rebel leaders.

Table 1. The Impact of Prior Rebel Leadership and Rebellion Participation on the Initiation of Militarized Disputes, 1946-2011

	Model 1 Variables of Interest	**Model 2** Fully Specified Model	**Model 3** Leaders Randomly Selected
Rebel Leadership	.191*** (.084)	.187** (.086)	.097 (0.156)
Prior Participation	.369*** (.169)	.364*** (.178)	.126* (.018)
Prior Rebel Win		.362* (.178)	.311 (.272)
Prior Rebel Loss		.267 (.274)	.207 (.134)
Capabilities		7.249** (1.622)	4.719* (2.134)
Satisfaction		.203 (.236)	.249 (.486)
Age		.212** (.087)	.118* (.017)
Autocracy		.166 (.135)	.206 (.225)
Time in Office		.009 (.019)	.112 (.089)
5-Year Challenge Lag		.312* (.068)	.205* (.011)
Constant	− 2.118*** (.271)	− 2.162*** (.278)	− 2.007*** (.221)
N	9451	9451	491
Pseudo r^2	.171	.172	.203
Log pseudo likelihood	− 4034.2	− 4174.6	− 217.4

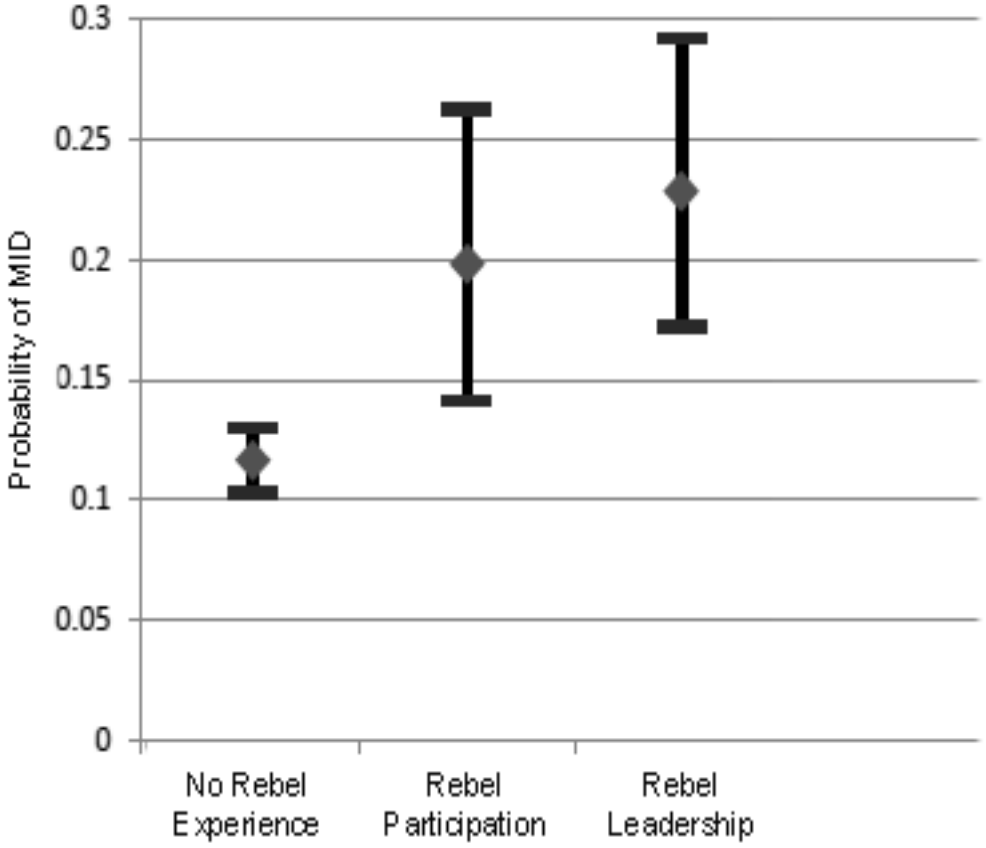
* p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01. Model 1&2; standard errors are adjusted for 1827 clusters. Model 3; standard errors are adjusted for 96 clusters.

Furthermore, Model 2 reveals that prior participation to a rebellion significantly increases the likelihood for a state leader to initiate an MID by 19% ($p<0.05$). It might be going too far to claim that participating to rebellious movements are much less riskier than leading them. This result, however, reveals that prior rebel leadership has a greater influence on the likelihood for a leader to initiate an MID than prior participation to rebellious movements. This finding may be driven by the fact that prior participation as a category includes a wider range from being a simple supporter to being a rebel elite. Being able to differentiate the extent of the participation with a larger universe of data would allow us to dig into this causal mechanism more efficiently.

Figure 2 shows that a shift from a leader not having any kind of rebel background to having a rebel participation background increases the probability of a militarized dispute by 54%. Also, a shift from a leader having only a rebel participation experience to a leader with a rebel leadership experience increases the probability of a militarized dispute by 23%. Finally, a shift from a leader not having any kind of rebel experience to a leader who once led a rebellion increases the probability of an MID by 94% (King et al., 2000).

The historical record, for instance, indicates two former rebel leaders to whom these results apply. Fidel Castro and Mobutu Sese Seko, both took power in autocracies and had extensive rebel experience (Horowitz and Stam, 2012). Both also engaged in international militarized behavior while in office. As described in detail below, these findings are not simply due to a selection process whereby countries that experience domestic turmoil are more likely to get involved in militarized disputes. They also are not solely due to regime type. Charles de Gaulle of France and David Ben Gurion of Israel are two former rebels who engaged in militarized behavior but led democracies.

Figure 2. Probability of MID Initiation Across State Leaders With Different Rebel Experience Conditions



In Model 2, the control variables mostly appear in predicted ways. However, the results do not provide any empirical evidence for the argument that leaders with prior rebel experience tend to be conflictual to atone for past military failures. The variable of *prior rebel loss* does not have any statistically significant effect on the likelihood of MID initiation. The reason driving this finding may be the fact that Skocpol's argument deals only with big revolutions and international defeats, and that the leaders in my dataset does not consist only of "revolutionary" leaders. *Prior rebel win*, on the other hand, has a statistically significant and positive effect on the likelihood of MID initiation. All else being equal, leaders with success as a rebel leader in

civil wars prior to entering office are over 36% more likely than their counterparts to initiate MIDs ($p<0.1$).

Countries with more material power are more likely to initiate militarized disputes, and countries that have been involved in MIDs in the recent past are likely to continue being involved in MIDs in the future. Regime type is not significantly related to MID initiation, while older leaders appear more likely to initiate militarized disputes, consistent with Horowitz et al. (2005).

One potential challenge to my results is that countries may select their leaders, at least in part, based on the collective beliefs among the country's selectorate about the international security environment and the military challenges the country is likely to face. Especially in democracies where leaders have to deal with more competitive political environment than in autocracies, this concern would be most prominent. Indeed, in some countries, having a prior military background is regarded as an advantage for presidential candidates based on the view that military experience will help a president take necessary actions in a dangerous international security environment. The findings above, thus, might be biased by the fact that countries select leaders with rebel or, at least, military background when they believe they will be involved to MIDs. However, this kind of selection of leaders on the basis of predicted adequacy does not necessarily confront my theoretical argument. The historical record indicates that in most countries non-risky candidates with prior military experience are selected, rather than the "riskier" types (Horowitz and Stam, 2012). In the worst case scenario, however, I need to consider the probability that selection effects give influence to most decisions to select those leaders with military experience into office, which can be problematic for my findings.

On the other hand, it actually solidifies, rather than undermines, the theoretical assumption that leader backgrounds really matter. If selectorate in a country firmly believe that prior military background makes leaders more qualified to be president during risky times, and the leader, therefore, is selected because of his or her background, one would tell that background is important as a variable for examination. Still, I address this selection concern with my initial attempt to control for the length of time a leader spends in office and the recent militarized and martial history of the country. Prior research finds no significant relationship between length of time a leader spends in office and the probability of MID initiation, which is a finding the results above replicate (Horowitz et al., 2005). Admittedly, the possibility still remains that selecting a leader with military background in office dissuades a militarized challenge from happening in the first place. While it is hard to perfectly address this concern, the rebel leadership and the prior rebel participation variables are statistically significant despite incorporating national MID participation in prior years into the fully model. Nevertheless, although the results of the Model 2 provide initial evidence that the relationship between prior rebel experience and bellicose behavior is not solely a result of selection effects, I estimate an additional model to more explicitly test for the ways that the leader selection process may bias the results. This significantly reduces the concern that leaders are being selected because of the key variables of interest.

The model 3, thus, deals with the questions of selection and endogeneity by isolating the leaders who left office randomly. Some leaders die in office of natural causes, and the leaders who replace them through a regular entry process, *e.g.* a vice president of the United States who replaces a president that dies of natural causes in office, are subject to different selection criteria than a head of state. It is the top of the ticket, in democratic regimes, for example, whose

experiences generally matter most for selection purposes. Thus, those leaders who entered office through a regular (as opposed to irregular or foreign-imposed) process after the prior leader died of natural causes can be isolated, and, thus, I can test the theory on that set of leaders (Goemans et al., 2009; Horowitz and Stam, 2012).

The results provide partial support for hypothesis 1a. There is still a significant and positive relationship between those with prior rebel participation experience and MID initiation. Prior participation to a rebellion increases the likelihood for a state leader to initiate an MID by 13% (p<0.1). The rebel leadership experience variable, though, is not statistically significant, but this is to be expected since this setup excludes most of the former rebel leaders. The model shows that, even when I explicitly isolate those leaders who left office randomly, prior rebel experience still has a significant impact on militarized behavior.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I develop an argument about the rebel experiences of leaders and test it on a dataset covering the rebel backgrounds of 1084 heads of state from 1946-2001. The theory and the data allow me to move beyond evaluating the effect of domestic institutions on leaders to see how leaders may have an independent role in shaping national policy, especially militarized policy.

Describing how leaders affect states' foreign policies in systematic and predictable ways does not imply that structural and unit-level variables do not matter. These results point out that they matter a great deal. However, this chapter demonstrates an important linkage between the prior rebel experiences of leaders and their propensity to initiate militarized disputes once in office. Put another way, leader backgrounds do communicate important information about basic

behavioral tendencies and *ceteris paribus* beliefs. Prior rebel participation and leadership experience condition the way leaders view the use of force, making it crucial to understand how that experience explains the initiation and escalation of military force in general.

The next step should be to improve the robustness of the results by developing several specifications that allow us to see whether the results are biased and/or altered by institutional factors. Also, there are several potential extensions for this research agenda. I focus in this chapter on the link between background rebel experiences and risk-taking behavior, rather than actual leader competence, but that is one promising way forward for the future. I must underline the fact that the results I present in here are limited. However, they simply refer to leaders' and states' willingness to take greater or lesser risks. In part, this reflects the links between the types of experiences I addressed here, ones that shape behavior through personality and risk attitude versus others that shape competence and skill through training. In future research, it could be fruitful and interesting to examine the success and failure of the risks that some leaders are more likely to take. Also, data that may allow us to differentiate the context of prior rebel experience would be truly beneficial since the combat/no-combat distinction within the prior participation to rebellious movements would communicate with the theoretical discussion much better.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Conclusion

Civil conflicts are complex and ambiguous phenomena that disable scholarly efforts that choose to investigate them along a single dimension. This complicated nature of the concept, instead, blurs our understanding of even the most straightforward conflict. Consequently, the question of rebel behavior does not indulge to monocausal explanations or overly simple dichotomous formulations. As an alternative approach, it seems plausible to think about contemporary rebel leaders as involving in a series of interactions with a variety of political and economic actors and influencing all stages of civil war. Despite the fact that it is impossible to identify all key challenges that influence the development of rebel governance of rebel leaders with a single catch-all variable, a leader-level concentration in the study of conflict still promises an outstanding potential for development.

There is little doubt that rebel governance systems are influenced by a variety of factors altering rebel behavior, including –but not limited to– contextual determinants of the conflict, state capacity, civilian demands, rebel capabilities, geography, conflict intensity, ethnic fractionalization, the imbrication of foreign or transnational actors, and internal cleavages. At

each stage of the conflict, however, rebel leaders are the ones who have to refine their governance strategy in response to these versatile dynamics, employing or avoiding approaches in an evolutionary fashion. Despite the constraints imposed by the historical context and political environment, rebel leaders still have a considerably broad sphere of influence within civil conflicts.

Indeed, we observe an emerging –though still incipient– literature on rebel leadership. The scholars of conflict have recently demonstrated that rebel leadership is likely to be a driving factor in the study of conflict even when leaders take off their guerilla uniforms and become the head of state. Rebel leadership, in this sense, has the potential to transform not only individuals who experience it but also conflicts in which they operate and even states where they find the opportunity to reach the top in their post-conflict political careers.

Considering the importance, and potentially causal role, of rebel leaders in the study of conflict processes, this dissertation examined rebel leader survival, how and to what extent they influence rebels' targeting civilians, and whether prior rebel leadership have an impact on the initiation of militarized interstate disputes. I collected new data on rebel leaders, identifying their name, age, education level, and tenure. In doing so, I intended to make a significant contribution to the empirical end of the emerging study of rebel leaders to which the shift in focus, I think, is very promising. In addition to the new data, what I intended the study to provide are important information on leader-level characteristics of rebel governance, rebel leaders' potential influences on rebel violence against civilians, and whether they take along their rebel experience when they pursue their political careers within a state structure.

I conclude the dissertation with a final discussion of each substantive chapter by placing the emphasis on their contribution to the literature; strengths, weaknesses and implications of the empirical findings; and, finally, thoughts on the future research directions.

Implications for the study of rebel leader survival

The motivating question of the first substantive chapter is what factors have an influence on rebel leader tenure. The short answer is that relative rebel strength, third-party involvement favoring the government, and oil production in the conflict-hosting country play a role in rebel leaders' success in staying in power. Rebel groups, I find, which are at parity with or stronger than the government are far more likely to be led by a longer-tenured leader. The hazard is 82% lower for those leaders.

This finding is interesting because it may support the view that the evidence in the literature that stronger rebel groups tend to fight shorter conflicts spurs further research. Indeed, this apparent asymmetry requires more attention since rebel groups that control territory or have transborder ethnic ties that are likely to support them –as other potential indicators of rebel strength– would tend to fight longer conflicts. Besides, one would assume that forces at parity would fight longer conflicts, given the mutual capacity to wage protracted conflict and the higher uncertainty about near-equal capabilities (Dixon, 2014). The duration of conflict, of course, does not necessarily goes hand in hand with rebel leader tenure. However, we would expect a higher likelihood of success for a rebellion when it is led by its initial organizer/commander throughout the conflict. Still though, this remains as an empirical question that has yet to be tested.

Just as similarities, there are, as a matter of course, dissimilarities between rebel leaders' tenure and state leaders' tenure. For the purposes of this chapter, though, I focus on the

similarities. The discussion could be more extensive to further clarify what it means for a rebel leader's tenure to end. One concern could be that when state leaders are successful they should be more likely to retain power but this may not be true for rebel leaders. Once rebel leaders are successful, they are more likely to obtain concessions or become state leaders. If this was the case, this could create problems for the theoretical argument and empirical tests. Variables such as relative rebel strength, for instance, might actually make it more likely for rebel leaders' tenure to end because they are successful leaders and the rebel movement was no longer necessary. An extensive discussion speaking to this concern, however, would be a more prominent need if I did not use right-censored data in which a leader is not failed when the period under observation is completed. This is exactly what I intend to focus on: rebel leaders who have not lost office before the war is over.

The empirical investigation in this chapter also reveals that third-party support for the government increases the risk for rebel leaders to be removed. It is 2.4 times more likely to lose his position for a rebel leader when he fights against an externally supported government. The ability of foreign actors to effect and even replace governmental institutions in government-controlled territories has clearly been well established (Callaghy, Kassimir, and Latham, 2001; Nordstrom, 2004; Mampilly, 2011). In line with this insight, my finding suggests that fighting against an externally supported government significantly undermines rebel leaders' ability to build and maintain stabilized rebel governance.

The findings also indicate that a 1,000 tons increase in the oil production per capita significantly increases the hazard of rebel leader removal (by 28%). Furthermore, the risk for rebel leaders evidently increases, as the production level exceeds 3,000 tons/year. Scholars have found an association between the incidence of primary commodity exports and specifically oil

wealth in states and the onset and duration of civil wars. Several conflicts in resource rich states are defined by violent scramble to control oil resources (Reno, 2003). This is a pattern we observe especially in African civil wars, such as those in Angola, Sudan, DRC, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In some of these conflicts, both incumbents and rebel leaders have hired private security companies from different countries such as the Ukraine and South Africa, to offer security assistance in exchange for privileged resource access (Mair, 2003). This signals that the conditions of conflict and violence in resource rich countries may involve a profiting by both incumbents and rebels (Nafziger and Auvinen, 2002). In other words, violence, as in the Liberia case, is likely to become a form of business rather than an instrument for furthering any coherent ideological or even ethnic interest (Ellis, 1998).[40] This contextual transformation in the conflict is also likely to feed "greed and opportunity" mechanism, and, consequently, increase the risk for rebel leaders because of the potential boost to the competitive violence.

One plausible concern about the findings in this chapter would be selection issues. More specifically, prospects for rebel success may influence whether rebel leaders start a civil conflict, whether external actors get involved in a civil conflict, and rebel leader survival. For example, the weak support for the external rebel support argument may be because external rebel support is more likely to occur in cases where rebel success and rebel leader survival is less likely. Where these factors are not controlled for, admittedly, it is hard to be completely confident that results are not biased. The current extent of data availability on rebel leaders, however, substantially restricts my ability to develop better-specified models that would be able to address such concerns. Being able to explicitly control for these factors with a larger universe of data should be the next task for future research.

[40] In Sierra Leone, both the incumbent forces and the rebels profited from and enriched themselves through the civil war. Even the official army members in Sierra Leone and Liberia were often involved to illegal, informal and violent economy through protection, complicity and direct activities (Keen 2003; Ikelegbe, 2005).

Implications for the study of rebel leaders and civilian victimization

Lacina and Gleditsch (2005) note that estimates of the total killed during the Congolese (DRC) civil war reach over 2.5 million. Only about 6% –or fewer than 150,000– of these were ascribable to battlefield combat. The numbers are 1.5 million and 11%, respectively, for the Angolan civil war. The table that Lacina and Gleditsch present simply shows that these two cases are not unique. What account, then, for the remaining who were killed? The current analyses contend that the contemporary modes of warfare are particularly indiscriminate, inhumane, or unjustifiably devastating to civilians.

Recent evidence has convincingly indicated that the civilian victimization during civil war substantially follows a strategic logic (Downes, 2008; Kalyvas, 2006). Some scholars contend that rebel leaders consider the killing and maiming of civilians as an introductory complement to conventional battlefield activities. Rebel fighters, on the other hand, tend to treat one-sided violence as a supplement to the soldering for which they were hired and/or trained for. Furthermore, the autoregressive nature of one-sided violence in civil conflict also reveals that such strategies are of a relatively short-term nature because periods with less pronounced victimization trigger similarly calm phases (Schneider et al., 2012).

Relying on these insights, the second substantive chapter focuses on the question whether, and if so in what way, rebel leader tenure has a significant impact on rebel violence against civilians. The increase in the length of rebel leaders' tenure, I find, is associated with fewer civilians killed by rebels. This finding is robust to controls for leaders' likelihood of survival, battle deaths in the conflict, intensity, conflict duration, and type of the conflict.

This finding speaks to the idea that the variation in leader-level –which is highly likely to be greater than group-level– rebel behavior is potentially a promising path to research. In order

to understand dynamics of rebellion in a consistent manner, we need to dig into the leader-level predictors. Indeed, the more we do so, the more we can know about the relationship between rebels and civilians and the better we can understand the potential for a rebel movement to transition from a militarized organization to one concerned more about the relatively humane governance issues (Wood, 2003).

The analysis in this chapter also begs for a larger universe of data upon which to draw more comprehensive conclusions. The empirical investigation, I must admit, is not exempt from some limitations. The model specifications should be further developed in order to control better for group dynamics. Being able to alleviate any concern that the significant association between higher number of civilian killings and rebel leaders' early tenure would be altered by some group-level factors will be the next task of research. Expanding the new data on rebel leaders across time and space will enable including a couple of more gorup-level predictors to the model specifications and, hopefully, strengthen the robustness of the findings presented in this chapter.

Implications for the study of prior rebel experience and interstate conflict

Unlike the literature on rebel leaders operating in civil conflict, the interstate conflict has had a well established body of research with leader-level analyses. It is conventional wisdom that military experience colors political elites' attitudes about their country's foreign policy goals (Feaver and Gelpi, 2004). Scholars of civilian-military relations assert that there are substantive differences of opinion between civilian and military leaders. In this sense, we should expect civilian and military leaders to approach the use of force differently.

Relying on some micro-level data, revealing that exposure to combat makes people more risk acceptant, we should also expect prior rebel experience to have such influence on rebel

leaders' post-conflict political careers. Leading a rebellion is a highly risky task, as rebel leaders must run the risk of failure –which is statistically very likely– and extremely severe consequences. Drawing on these, the third and final substantive chapter studies rebel leaders' post-conflict political career where they become state leaders by specifically focusing on the potential impact of prior rebel experience in the likelihood for those leaders to initiate militarized interstate disputes.

The empirical evidence presented in this chapter suggests that both prior rebel leadership and prior rebel participation have a positive and significant effect on the likelihood for a state leader to initiate an MID. A shift from a leader not having any kind of rebel experience to a leader who once led a rebellion, I find, increases the probability of an MID by 94%. This finding is robust to controls for material capabilities of the state, satisfaction with the current international system, leader age, regime type, leaders' time in office, states' recent history of conflict, and prior rebel success.

The findings are in line with the traditional school of thought arguing that militaries are susceptible to the use of force and seeking military solutions to political problems. In other words, the long-standing concern that military experience would make the leader more bellicose is also prominent for those states being led by ex-rebel leaders. In terms of policy implications, though, ex-rebel leaders differ from those with a regular military experience. In most cases, rebel leaders get into office by seizing the power –relying on their rebel success and/or charisma– whereas those with regular military experience –whom we observe mostly in the Western democracies– are selected into office. Therefore, there is opportunity for the selectorate not to choose the latter, while the selectorate, if any, in a post-civil conflict country might not be provided the chance of avoiding the presidency of the former. Indeed, this would fuel the conflict

circle in the long-term as instability and militaristic authoritarianism are likely to generate new groups with grievance.

As a clear path for the next research agenda, I should focus on collecting more data to be able to differentiate the potential impacts of being exposed to combat during the rebellion. In addition to this, having data on combat/no-combat distinction within the prior participation to rebellious movements would also help to further specify the theoretical discussion.

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Zorn, Christopher J., 1998. "An analytic and empirical examination of zero-inflated and hurdle poisson specifications," Sociological Methods & Research 26(3): 368-400.

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Inter-University Consortium for Political & Social Research Summer Program (ICPSR)
2012: Regression II, taught by Brian Pollins (Department of Political Science, Ohio State University).
2012: Categorical Variables, taught by Shawna Smith (Department of Sociology, Indiana University).
2013: Applied Bayesian Modeling for the Social Sciences, taught by Ryan Bakker (Department of Political Science, University of Georgia).
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CERTIFICATES, DISTINCTIONS and ACHIEVEMENTS

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Civil Conflict
Civilian Victimization
Rebel Leaders
Leader Survival
Political Violence
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RESEARCH

Publications

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2009. KPSS Hazirlik: Uluslararasi Iliskiler, Ankara, Turkey: Asil Publications.

2007. Putin Donemi Rusya Federasyonu-NATO Iliskileri (Russian Federation-NATO Relations in Putin's Era), SDU Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, pp. 339-58.

2006. Soguk Savas Sonrasi Uluslararasi Terorizmin Donusumu ve Terorizmle Mucadele (The Transformation of International Terrorism and The Struggle Against Terrorism in the Post-Cold War Era)", SDU Journal of Social Sciences, Fall, pp. 98-119.

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2015. Rebel Leader Survival, Relative Rebel Strength, and External Support in Civil Conflict, presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

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2009. The Kurdish Question in the Context of Turkish-American Relations. presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL. (with Demirdas, Ali)

2008. Think Global, Act Local? European Security Strategy and Security-oriented Threats for EU's Economic Development, International Conference on Management and

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Waltz, Kenneth N. 2010. Insan, Devlet, ve Savas: Teorik Bir Analiz (Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis), Ankara, Turkey: Asil Publications.

RESEARCH and TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Department of Political Science, University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS. 2013-2015.

Research Assistant, Department of Political Science, University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS. 2011-2012.
Gulf Coast Oil Spill Economic Impact Assessment Project, University of Mississippi & University of Florida.

Teaching Assistant, Department of International Relations, Suleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey, 2005-2010.
Courses Taught: Political History, Turkish Foreign Policy, International Relations Theory, International Law.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2014. Chair, The Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Political Science Association, San Antonio, TX.

2014. Chair, The Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA.

MEMBERSHIPS

Midwest Political Science Association
American Political Science Association
British Political Science Association